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ECHOES

justice, peace and creation news

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FEATURING

Globalisation

Echoes From Elsewhere

An Introduction To Echoes Magazine In Reactions, Facts and Issues From All Over The World

A gift to the world in Oslo

Treaty banning antipersonnel mines adopted!

(Oslo, Norway: 17 September 1997) The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), a worldwide coalition of over 1,000 non-governmental organisations in over 60 countries, saw the achievement in Oslo, Norway today of a treaty banning the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of antipersonnel landmines. Landmines maim and kill an estimated 26,000 victims worldwide every year, the vast majority innocent men, women and children.

Just before adoption of the convention, the United States made a statement that because it had been unable to gain any significant support, it was regretfully withdrawing its proposals.

Jody Williams, Coordinator of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, at a press conference jointly held with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) shortly after the conference adjourned, thanked the participating nations for "staying firm in the face of strong lobbying by the US and other nations to achieve a compromise. The successful negotiation of an unambiguous ban treaty today shows the world recognises that ALL antipersonnel mines are illegal in ALL circumstances," she said. "The treaty shows that humanity has the power to move mountains," said Louise Doswald-Beck, head of the delegation of the ICRC. "We now need to ensure nations sign and ratify the treaty."

WCC response

The World Council of Churches has warmly welcomed the decision announced by the Nobel Committee to grant the 1997 Peace Prize to the ICBL and its coordinator, Jody Williams, said Rev. Dwain Epps, executive secretary for WCC International Affairs, at the Council's Geneva headquarters.

The World Council of Churches and many of its member churches around the world have actively supported and participated in this campaign to ban the production, stockpiling, sale and use of anti-personnel mines.

In 1995 the WCC Central Committee encouraged member churches "to collect signatures through local congregations to protest the manufacturing of anti-personnel mines", and to press for the immediate clearance of those already deployed. Last month, the Central Committee itself asked the Council's officers to send a letter of encouragement to participants in the Oslo Diplomatic Conference on Landmines. Their message expressed the hope that the agreement being finalised, there would be a "true ban treaty without any exemptions and reservations", and urged "all states to ratify it".

"The churches have first-hand experience of the terrible human suffering which landmines inflict on the most vulnerable people caught in zones of conflict, particularly peasant women and children," said Rev. Dwain Epps. "These indiscriminate weapons belong to a by-gone age when the super-powers fought proxy wars in the world's poorest countries. The churches vigorously protested this practice then, and will not accept today the 'national security' arguments used by some states to justify their refusal to join in a comprehensive ban. We hope that nations who remain undecided or who oppose the present treaty will take this new opportunity to announce that they will join the rest of the world in Ottowa on 3-4 December in signing this historic document."

Indigenous communities under threat in mining

Hotspots

In May 1996 an international consultation on mining and Indigenous Peoples was held in London. Indigenous representatives from twenty-four countries met to coordinate their response to the increasing encroachment onto their lands by multinational mining corporations. An Indigenous Planning Committee (IPC) was born.

At the end of the consultation, the IPC published a list of mining *Hotspots* - areas of immediate concern to Indigenous Peoples. It decided to release a new or updated list each year to coincide with the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (August 9).

The complete list of the hotspots information on the following countries, can be obtained from Bob Scott, WCC, Unit on Justice, Peace and Creation, at our usual address:

Papua New Guinea, West Papua, Philippines, Russia, Venezuela, Western Shoshone (USA), Mole Lake Chippewa (USA), Canada, Surinam, Ecuador.

The "Broken Chair" sculpture, by Daniel Berset, in front of the United Nations in Geneva, symbolises the human devastation generated by antipersonnel landmines.

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Echoes
justice, peace and creation news

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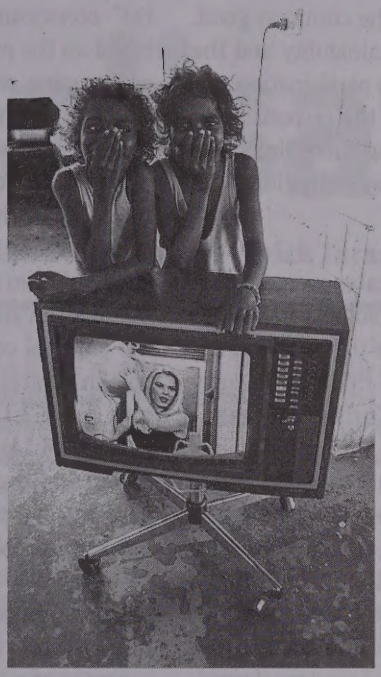
OIKUMENE AND GLOBALISATION

by Konrad Raiser



One of the challenges which goes to the centre of our ecumenical commitment is that of globalisation.

The term "globalisation" itself is still relatively new, but it refers to trends and developments which have been visible for more than twenty years. There are at least three factors which have transformed the emerging transnationalisation of business and the growing interdependence of societies into the present manifestations of globalisation: (1) the awareness of the global character of ecological threats; (2) the. electronic revolution and its effects in the areas of communication and transport, production and finance; and (3) the disintegration of the communist world, ending the confrontation of the Cold War and leaving western capitalism as the sole competitor for global hegemony. These processes point to factual changes which call for interpretation and response since their long-term implications are not clear. Globalisation as a term describing these epochal changes has many contradictory faces. There is the globalisation of the media and of electronic communication and the globalisation of the movements of refugees and of migrant workers. We witness the globalisation of trade and financial transactions and the globalisation of ecological destruction. Globalisation on the one hand increases opportunities for cooperation and participation, and on the other hand promotes marginalisation and exclusion. As with most processes of historic change, there are winners and losers. It calls, therefore, for corrective action on the political level, defending the common interests of all.

This takes us to the core of the challenge which arises from the fact that globalisation is increasingly being turned into a political project. In fact, the present extent of globalisation, rather than being the sheer manifestation of historical necessity, is to a large degree the consequence of deliberate decisions on the part of governments, reflecting the neo-liberal economic theory. The goal of the globalisation of markets increasingly replaces the search for a viable order of world community. The call for the liberalisation of capital movements, for the deregulation and privatisation of social and economic systems, and for the expansion of free trade is considered the only valid response to the processes of globalisation on the national and regional levels. This project has been given the status of unquestioned truth by the policies and actions of the international financial and economic institutions, i.e. the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation. The French call this feature of globalisation *la pensée unique* and most of the present controversial discussion focuses on globalisation as a political ideology rather than on the sober analysis and understanding of the historical processes referred to above.

The dramatic and destructive effects of these policies of globalisation are before our eyes: they have led to an unprecedented concentration of power and wealth in the hands of a small minority, thus widening the gap between rich and poor both within and between countries. While disregarding the traditional frontiers and dividing lines between nations and cultures, globalisation has created a situation of marginalisation, exclusion and social

disintegration, manifested by violence, corruption and drug trafficking. Ironically, globalisation as a political project also leads to a weakening of political institutions and their legitimacy on the national as well as on the international level. The defense of the common good, the concern for environmental sustainability and the creation of structures for democratic participation and control of the exercise of power, i.e the responsibility for shaping the public space, is being subordinated to the forces and demands of competition in the globalised market.

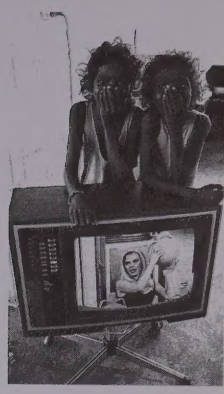
While the WCC and the ecumenical movement cannot but resist globalisation as an ideological and political project, we cannot easily opt out of the historical dynamic and the ambiguities of global interdependence. Too strong has been the tradition of Christocentric universalism and the commitment to the unity of humankind, too deeply have the WCC and the ecumenical movement been involved throughout this century in the creation of viable structures and norms of international order, particularly through the United Nations, to join hands easily with a wholesale rejection of globalisation. The ecumenical movement, promoting the unity of the Christian community and the transformation of separate denominational identities, has to acknowledge its role as a contributing factor to the present global predicament. While it cannot but reject the vision implied in the political project of globalisation, it has to accept the challenge to articulate and embody an alternative understanding and vision of globalisation. This challenge has been recognised clearly in the context of the earlier ecumenical discussions on transnational corporations.

Two years ago, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, the WCC reiterated its commitment to the vision incorporated in the UN Charter for a just and peaceful world order. In a special memorandum, it reaffirmed "the centrality of the United Nations in the conduct of international relations, the safeguarding of the international rule of law, and the elaboration of norms and standards governing international behaviour for the benefit of the whole of humankind and the global environment" (Central Committee, Geneva 1995). The memorandum recalls in particular that the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, beginning with the words: "We, the people of the United Nations ...", was added on the insistence of early ecumenical leaders. It is this dimension of the global reality, reflecting the everyday life of people and structures of civil society, which has to be strengthened today if the dominance of the globalised economy is to be broken and the legitimacy of political institutions restored.

The Christian community preserves the memory of the response of the Ancient Church to an earlier form of globalisation in the Hellenistic empire. The very concept of the oikoumene was the expression of this "global" consciousness. The Hellenistic oikoumene was based on the principle of unity: one God, one emperor, one empire; one language, one currency, one citizenship, but this imperial globalisation demanded its price then, as it does today i.e. the exclusion of the slaves and of the barbaric people beyond the borders of the empire. The early Christian community developed and spread among disinherited people on the fringe of the empire. When the New Testament speaks about the oikoumene, an attitude of critical distance with regard to the political connotations of the term is still discernable in several instances, especially in the Lucan writings (Luke 2:1, 4:5-7, Acts 17:6) and in Revelation (especially 16:14). The Letter to the Hebrews refers to the oikoumene to come, suggesting that the gospel of God's coming reign implies an alternative vision of the oikoumene of global reality.

It was this alternative vision of the oikoumene which inspired early Christian mission, making use of the advantages of a "globalised" system. It found expression in the formation of a "counter-culture" of inclusive communities and of solidarity with the poor and the victims of imperial globalisation. Over against the imperial structures of governance, the Early Church developed its own structure as a community of local churches which acknowledged each other in their diversity. Christian conciliarity and conciliar fellowship, rooted in the celebration of the one Eucharist, were the specific response of the church to the challenges of this early form of globalisation. Of course, we know how, through the Constantinian alliance, ecclesial conciliarity, the praxis of unity and the understanding of the oikoumene were adapted and transformed, losing much of their critical potential. But the memory of the alternative vision has lived on.

The ecumenical movement of our century has drawn on this memory, most recently in the conciliar process on justice, peace and creation. We are beginning to see more clearly that the challenge of globalisation must lead to a re-examination of our ecumenical commitment, freeing the critical potential of its alternative vision of global reality and thus enabling it to become a source of inspiration for rebuilding community and for developing and strengthening a culture of life and hope. This implies a new understanding of what it means to be the church.



Globalisation

by Helen Moussa and Patrick Taran

A major component of globalisation is the elimination of restrictions on the free movement across borders of capital, goods, resources, technology, and services, but not of labour. The rhetoric surrounding the promotion of globalisation proclaims that this process will maintain economic growth, and therefore standards of living, in the developed, industrialised countries. The rhetoric also asserts that this process will be key to the eventual improvement of conditions in the rest of the world.

However, the experience of an increasing number of people around the world over the last several years has been of growing unemployment or underemployment, stagnation or decrease in earnings for those employed, disappearing job security, increasing poverty, reductions in access to health care, education, public transportation, housing, elimination of public benefits or "safety nets" for those without access to employment, in short, increasing marginalisation and exclusion.

Consequences of globalisation

In more developed, industrialised societies, reduced government expenditures are accompanying the process of globalisation. As a result, citizens of these societies are experiencing staged reductions in expectations. In this process, people are mobilised to fight each other over the reduction or losses of social services, public benefits and assistance to vulnerable groups: citizens against foreigners, the young against old, the employed versus the marginalised (welfare bums), public versus private, immigrants versus minorities, etc.

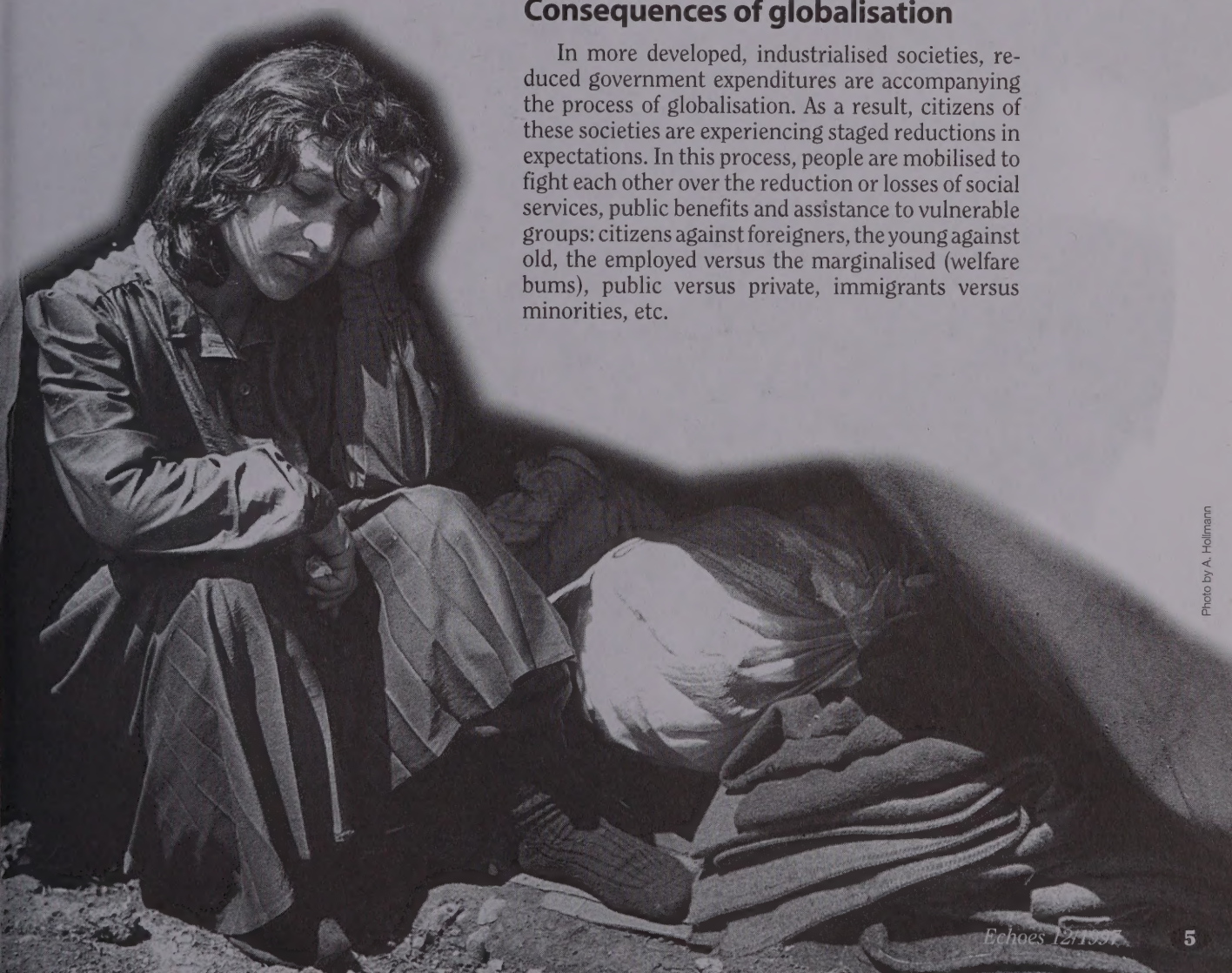


Photo by A. Hollmann

A breakdown of social institutions is happening much more quickly, even catastrophically, in the marginalised countries. In the 1950s and '60s, newly emerging states in Africa and countries in other regions experienced improvements in production and in earnings from export of commodities and resources. Significant increases in collective health, education, transportation and nutrition resulted, aided in part by government spending and subsidies.

Then came the collapse of commodity prices. After declining in the 1970s, prices fell by half for 33 primary products (in a group index) from 1980 to 1991.[1] The result was a decline in per-capita income and the eradication of trade surpluses. Rapid increases in foreign debt followed as countries borrowed heavily to attempt to maintain standards, or to militarise in the face of rising discontent.

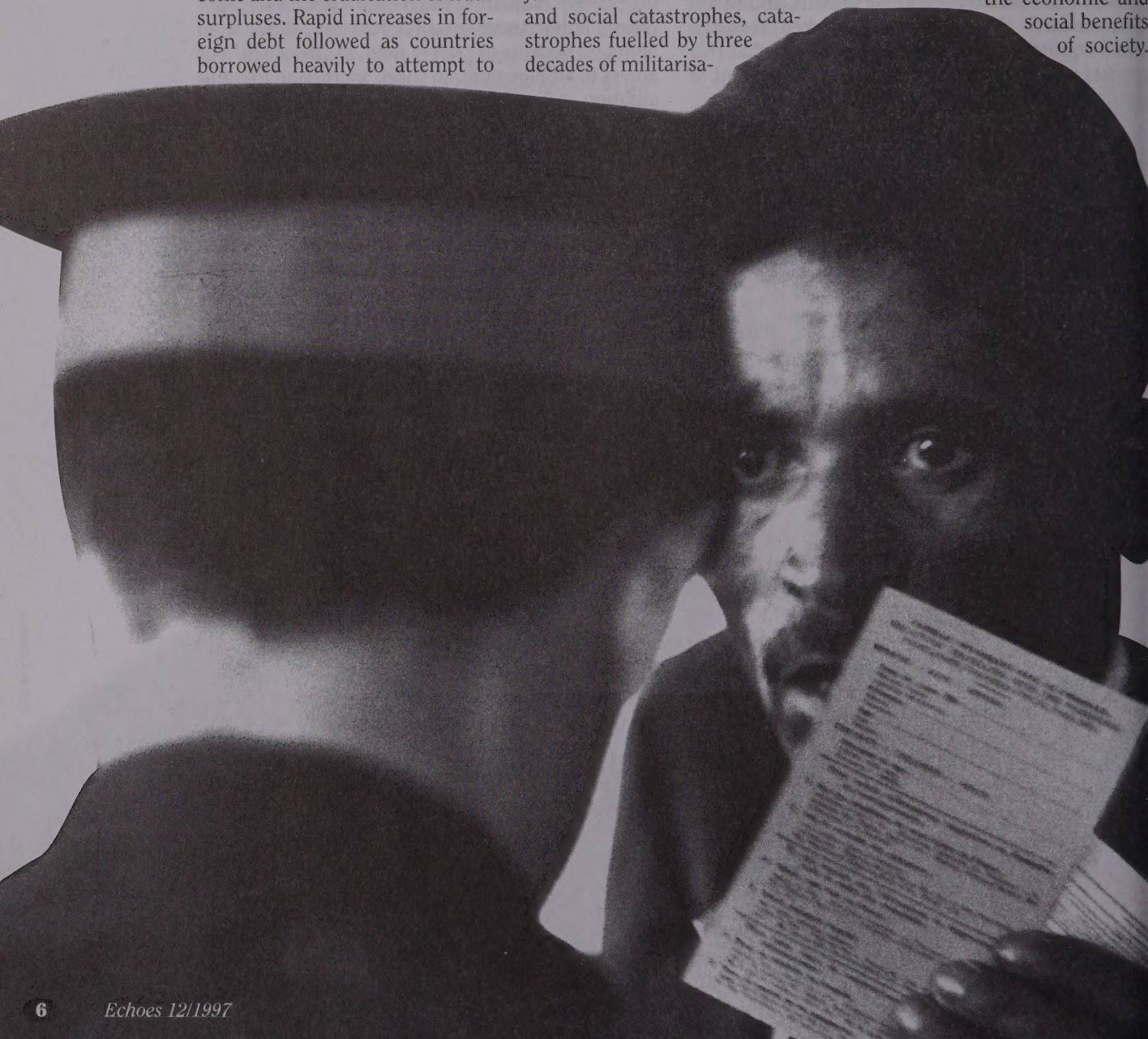
Rising debt and skyrocketing national budget deficits produced fiscal crises in many countries. The response from international lending institutions was to design and implement "structural adjustment programmes" to force governments to "adjust" to the consequences of price changes in the emerging global market.

The result so far in most countries has been the rise of ethnic-based regrouping and emergence of fundamentalism, as people find themselves compelled to rely on traditional social bonds simply to survive. In some cases, now often in the news headlines, these adjustments have led to economic and social catastrophes, catastrophes fuelled by three decades of militarisation of countries by the cold-war superpowers.

Widespread unemployment and marginalisation have been major causes of social conflict or civil strife in numerous countries. Civil strife and the military repression that usually follows are acknowledged as compelling motivations for displacement and refugee flight.

Debt burden

Structural adjustment measures, applied in countries both in the North and the South, have reduced or eliminated health, education, and social services. A growing number of people are excluded from meaningful participation in the economic and social benefits of society.



Rather, they are relegated to an existence of absolute misery and privation, even as the global capacity to produce goods continues to grow. Entire countries are excluded from active participation in the processes and benefits of the global market economy.

Third-world countries not only bear the heaviest debt burden but the risk of war is most likely to occur in these countries – 24 out of 27 countries involved in war in the past 10 years are heavily indebted. Indebtedness of third-world countries went from US$250 billion in 1970 to US$1,900 billion.[2]

As governments are forced to implement unpopular policies to meet conditions imposed by international institutions, they often implement more repressive measures against their populations. When they must cut government spending by firing public employees, strong public sector unions must be suppressed. Spending on police and military forces usually increases as a way of maintaining "public order" in the face of popular opposition to governmental policies mandated by international economic situations. The repression can lead to people leaving their countries for political as well as economic reasons.

Technological change, globalisation of work and marginalisation

The development of new technologies in the last two decades has accelerated increases in human productivity – the amount produced by human labour. Through automation and use of robotics, less and less human labour is needed for the production of more and more industrial goods. Similarly, more and more services, such as data processing, can be provided using fewer people through computerisation.

Technological advances in many fields, from transportation to electronic data transmission, also make it easier to produce goods and services anywhere in the world for use or consumption anywhere else.

Two principal results of these technological developments have been what is now called "jobless growth", and the relocation of many production and service activities away from industrialised countries, generally to where labour costs are cheaper.

These results have profound impacts on human migration. They increase pressures for people to migrate by eliminating possibilities of earning a living – even surviving – in places of origin. And they underlie hostility and rejection of refugees and migrants in countries of destination which now also face growing unemployment and underemployment.

When westerners come to our countries to work, they are called "expatriate experts". When we come to their countries with our diplomas we become "migrant workers."[3]

Colombian lawyer and former judge exiled in Rome

Free trade

Trade liberalisation and foreign investment are frequently proposed as key elements for an international strategy to improve conditions in developing countries, one result of which would be to reduce migration pressures.

Conventional wisdom is that trade barriers have posed an immense restriction on developing countries, particularly because tariffs and barriers have been highest on manufactured goods for which poor countries have competitive advantage: labour-intensive exports such as textiles, clothing and footwear. At the same time, high levels of agricultural subsidies and price supports in industrialised countries have limited export markets for developing countries. Perhaps even more serious, immigration controls deny workers access to non-national labour markets, thus restricting or preventing their possibility to go where they could earn a living.

The conclusion of the so-called Uruguay Round of negotiations for the General Accord on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the establishment of the World Trade Organisation have set in place a broad new regime of "free trade." Most countries world-wide have committed themselves to eliminating immediately or over a number of years existing restrictions and duties on imports. Government subsidies on exports, particularly on agricultural products, are also to be eliminated. This is intended to stimulate growth of production, of import/export trade, and of economic activity overall.

However, the effects of increased trade on migration are currently being hotly debated. In fact many analysts concede that trade liberalisation will lead to increases in migration in the short run.

Agriculture promises to be one of the sectors most affected. Many millions of people continue to remain on the land and make their living from small-scale, labour-intensive farming throughout the developing world. Agriculture remains the chief economic sector in most developing countries, often providing employment for half or more of the work force, 72% in Africa.[4]

Small-scale farmers and agricultural workers in the South cannot compete on the "even playing field" set by the global market with

huge, industrial-scale agricultural business enterprises in the United States, Canada and other developed countries, whose large scale and economic efficiency were developed with the aid of government subsidies. Trade liberalisation under GATT is sending farmers and farm workers throughout the South the same way that the family farmers of the industrialised countries have gone: out of business, displaced from the land as migrants, and ending up seeking a living or mere survival in urban centres.

Liberalised trade heightens competitiveness, especially related to labour costs. The edge goes to enterprises and countries utilising non-unionised labour, low-paid contract workers, and temporary, casual and part-time workers, usually without benefits or health or safety protections. "Companies can relocate their entire production facilities, without notice, without much warning from one territory to another. This leaves both massive dislocations and also weakens the power of labour to defend its interests."[5] Those people dislocated by the disappearance from their community of sources of employment may have little choice but to migrate elsewhere as well.

Liberalised trade conditions leading to increased volume of trade are already having negative environmental consequences by encouraging, on the one hand, increasing depletion of resources, such as by accelerating deforestation through logging for timber export and depletion of coastal seafood fisheries to supply foreign market demand. On the other hand, the poor are often dispossessed of access to land, fisheries, forests and other resources utilised to produce for export. As a result, they are forced into smaller and more fragile ecological niches, which scarce resources they are forced to overuse just to survive. When these overused places give out altogether, the affected people must move elsewhere to survive.

The burden on women

There is a close connection between globalisation and the burden placed on women.

The pressures on women as household care-givers increase because the public service system fails to meet their needs for social services. Their access to health and education services diminishes just at the time they need it most. Urban women spend more time working and looking for affordable food and household needs. Rural women spend more time fetching water and fuel.

Organised trafficking of women and children in the sex trade is another form of forced displacement resulting from dire economic situations of families. Women and girls are lured to leave rural areas and even their country for a "better job". Sometimes parents and even spouses will give permission for women and children to "work abroad". The motivating force is that they will be able to save from their higher earnings and send money back home.

Deceptively, structural adjustment programmes may create an increase in employment of women and what has been termed the "feminisation of migration."[6] In such cases, women are employed predominantly in export-oriented industries and particularly in free-trade zones. The wages are low. Because there is little security in their jobs and the working conditions can be hazardous to their health, there is high job turnover.

Challenge for action

One of the most disturbing aspects of the globalisation process – in its essence the emancipation of capital from social control – is that the very capacity for collective political response is dismantled.

Political action at the international level is much easier for highly organised and powerful transnational business enterprises to accomplish than for popular, community-based social movements. Even for most governments, influencing international institutions and policies is extremely complex and difficult. Furthermore, governments are perceived as being weaker in the face of deregulated capital movements and the power of giant enterprises. Indeed, governments are exploiting these perceptions to limit their accountability to their citizens, aggravating people's perception of powerlessness to effect change or defend their interests.

Notes:

1. United Nations Development Programme (1992). *Human Develop-ment Report* 1992. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press: 59.
2. Susan George, "Le danger d'un chaos financier généralisé." The *Monde Diplomatique*, Juillet 1995: 23-24.
3. Cited in Mariette Grange, "J'étais un étranger, et vous m'avez recueilli." *La voix Protestante*. Edition Parisienne, 22 Janvier, 96: 8.
4. Peter Madden, *"The Poor Get Poorer; The Impact of the GATT Uruguay Round on Developing Countries."* London: Christian Aid booklet, April, 1994: 2.
5. Ibid.
6. S. Castles and M. Miller (1993), *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*. London: Macmillan: 8.

Excerpted from the section by the same title from the Resource book on Uprooted People, compiled and prepared by Helen Moussa and Patrick Taran, published in November 1996, by the World Council of Churches Refugee and Migration Service.

Helen Moussa is executive secretary for Uprooted People and Patrick Taran serves as executive secretary for Migration at the WCC.

Of Mice and Elephants

by Peter Bosshard

The author examines, from the perspective of an NGO, some of the problems associated with private resource flows between the North and the South. Although private financial flows have dwarfed official flows, they are mainly concentrated in a few countries in the South and in a few key sectors within these countries. To address some of these problems, he suggests, apart from a strong state and a key role by civil society, that the North keeps its commitment under UNCED with regard to ODA flows and that the UN organisations pay more attention to the environmental and developmental issues raised by these resource flows.

In addressing the issue of financial transfers between the North and the South, I would like to point out some quantitative and qualitative problems of these financial flows from a non-governmental organisation (NGO) perspective.

The proportions of financial flows have changed dramatically since the early 1990s. In 1991, private flows (at $57 billion) were still smaller than official flows (at $66 billion). In 1996, private flows reached $244 billion, and thus completely dwarfed the official flows of $41 billion . We are talking about net flows here. So have these net flows resolved all financial problems? Have they abolished the need for continued official development assistance (ODA), as some neo-liberal observers want to make us believe?

Problems associated with private flows

Even on a purely financial level, the picture is less bright than it looks at first. Let me point out the following problems:

• It is common knowledge that the private resource flows to the South are highly concentrated. 73% of all private flows in 1996 went to twelve countries, and a staggering 53% went to five countries only. On the other hand, only 3% of all flows (or $7 billion) were directed at the low-income countries, excluding China and India. "You feed elephants more than mice", a representative of the International Finance Corporation (an institution of the World Bank Group) explained recently. What he meant to say, is that it is normal that more private resources flow to richer countries than to the poor. Yet even in relative terms, private flows disproportionately concentrate on the richer countries. As a share of GNP, middle-income countries received more than twice as many private resources in 1996 as low-income countries did (again without China and India).

Private resource flows are strongly concentrated in a few key sectors too. Private foreign investments and project-financing loans focus on telecommunications, power, and the transport sector.

They cannot substitute for the shrinking official development assistance flows on grant terms which used to benefit the social sectors.

•Since 1993, portfolio investments have made up more than one third of all private flows to the South. We know since the Mexican

peso crisis at the latest, that these flows are highly volatile and can quickly leave a country at the first sign of trouble. Both rapid inflows and rapid outflows strongly affect national currencies and can create problems for the productive sectors of the economy. Finally, there are a variety of reverse flows which do not show up in the so-called net transfers to the South. Net flow data on debt for example, do not take into account interest outflows, and net investment data do not take into account the outflows of profits, dividends or royalties. If interest is integrated into the picture, debt flows have been negative in both 1995 and 1996. Of course, invisible negative transfers caused by deteriorating terms of trade, manipulated transfer prices and other forms of capital flight are not accounted for in official statistics either. Finally, private flows must be disaggregated by their receivers. While debt inflows usually go to the private sectors, the bulk of amortisation and interest is paid for by the governments. Most of the 41 governments covered by the so-called Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Debt Initiative still pay more than one fifth of their revenues on external debt service. So in sum, the staggering new resource flows to the South are a phenomenon of a handful of "elephants", and of mainly private "elephants" at that.

Important policy questions

Would all be well if private resource flows were more evenly distributed between mice and elephants, and were less volatile? No, it wouldn't. From an NGO perspective, private resource flows raise important policy questions too. Let me point out the following problems:

• We are told that countries benefit from private resource flows if their governments put their houses in order. The key to attracting private flows, in other words, is supposed to be structural adjustment. But this view is simplistic: we have seen many cases of structurally adjusted economies which hardly attract any private flows because they are, for example, landlocked and far away from interesting markets. Secondly, we have seen countries which have undergone structural adjustment for 15 years and where wealth is still trickling from the poor to the rich, and not from the rich to the poor. So in the perspective of neo-liberal observers, I am afraid, houses are "put in order" when all the bills are paid, not when the inhabitants are well off.

• More specifically, the price which governments have to pay for attracting private resources is often the privatisation of public assets, and the opening up of public sectors to private investors. While in an NGO perspective, privatisations might be justified in certain cases, they often have a wide range of negative impacts: First, they usually strengthen efficiency at the price of social equity. When health or education are privatised, general access to basic schooling and medication is often replaced by user fees. Secondly, they diminish the accountability of service providers to the public at large. When power plants are privatised, for example, citizens often find it difficult to get access to environmental assessments or other important documents, let alone to the decision-making process. Finally, private investors tend to externalise as many environmental and social costs as they can. This is the law of the market. So unless a strict regulatory framework is set up, private investors will try to avoid stringent environmental obligations altogether.

Photo by Peter Williams

Some general proposals

For all these reasons, NGOs generally not only criticise the uneven distribution of private resource flows. They find that private investments and loans do not provide the solution to many problems which societies face. Which recommendations do NGOs put forward then? Let me briefly make the following general proposals:

• Under market conditions, private investors will strengthen economic efficiency, but will not take care of social equity. While efficiency has been greatly increased on a global level since the 1960s, so has inequity. A strong state and a strong civil society are needed for redressing this dangerous trend. NGOs are happy to see that the World Bank seems to come around to accepting an effective state, even if its new World Development Report still overlooks many important issues.

• A disaggregation by countries and sectors demonstrates that private flows cannot substitute for official development assistance. Northern governments should live up to their commitment, under the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), to increase their ODA flows towards the 0.7% level. On the other hand, it is equally important that the main resource outflows from the South be reduced or stopped. Specialised NGOs have made detailed proposals on how to resolve the debt problem, for example, by a more comprehensive and generous HIPC initiative. And most NGOs strongly oppose the establishment of a Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which would seriously weaken the power of governments vis-a-vis foreign investors.

Governments should be in a position to embrace foreign investment selectively, to subject them to the conditions of public accountability and of social and environmental sustainability.

• Finally, the discussion of private resource flows by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is very welcome. For too long, this issue has been left almost completely to the international financial institutions. The UN organisations should pay more attention to the important developmental and environmental issues raised by these resource flows. ECOSOC could cover some of the specific questions discussed, in its "World Economic and Social Survey". It could also advise the secretaries of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) or the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to study them and to report back to ECOSOC in 1998.

Peter Bosshard is Secretary of Berne Declaration, a Swiss public-interest group.

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The effects of globalisation on culture through the eyes of an African woman

by Fridah Muyale-Manenji

"Shonyala okhumanya inzu yowasio tawe". This literally means that you cannot manage or know the affairs of the house of your neighbour. This is a saying the people of Ebukanga village, Kisa location in Kakamega district of the Western Province of Kenya usually use when respecting one's privacy and affairs. At times this saying is also used when people assume to know what is going on in somebody's home. Here in Zimbabwe the country in which "I came to cook" (in my culture, when a woman is married, she has gone to cook), they say "Chakafukidza dzimba matenga"(What covers the house is the roof). This saying is almost similar to the first one in the sense that it implies that it is only the people who live in the house that know what is happening in their lives, no matter what assumptions or concepts people outside the house have of them.

When ECHOES asked me to write an article on *globalisation and its impact on culture*, I spent a few days wondering how to approach this topic and eventually decided to write as an African woman involved in the African struggle, and as a mother and wife who believes in justice. So if this article is biased in any way, it is because I have chosen to write from this particular perspective. Culture is such a broad term and when it comes to my mind, I think of values and norms people have which make them live in a particular way. A way of living in a particular community. In other words, the sum total of all things that refer to religion, roots of people, symbols, language, songs, stories, celebrations and all expressions of our way of life. It encompasses food production, technology, architecture, kinship, the way we relate to each other, political and economic systems and all the social relationships these entail.

Each culture has its own personality. The fact that we are all human does not mean that we are all the same. To ignore this would be destroying God's own beautiful

Photo: WCC

rainbow made from the many colours of cultural diversity. Culture is learned. This is the most common attribute. The European beckons while holding his hand with the fingers uppermost, while the African does so with the fingers pointing down. Each has learned his/her way. Such learning does not take place through natural inheritance. It is not genetically transmitted. Rather, it takes place by a process of absorption from the social environment or through deliberate instruction. No culture is possible without a language. It is bound up with language. This is an important prerequisite and therefore to kill a language is to kill a culture.

Culture is never static. It is dynamic. Every moment we are being transformed, always growing like the cells in our bodies. It changes exactly the same way as human beings change. We cannot romanticise our culture. Our grandfathers did not walk on the same top soil as we do and our children will have different soil. I would never dare tell my mother where to place the flower pot in the living room. Today my daughter can easily change the position of the flower pot in our living room even without consulting me. This transformation is so gradual and not sudden or abrupt. Culture is a continuous process of change but in spite of the change, culture continues to give a community a sense of identity, dignity, continuity, security and binds society together.

The effect globalisation has had on culture is immense and diverse. It has affected people's cultural behaviours in different ways. People have had to change their ways of life. The loud echoing advertisement rhythms of the famous Coca-Cola drinks can be heard across boundaries in towns, cities and townships and even in remote rural areas where drinking water is a problem to get. Globalisation in Africa involves one fundamental project: that of opening up the economies of all countries freely and widely to the global market and its forces.

To this end, it is demanded that, whatever the nature of their economies, their level of development, and whatever their location in the global economy, all countries must pursue a common set of economic policies. In particular, they must permit the free and indiscriminate operation of transnational corporations in their economies: open their economies freely and indiscriminately to imports and concentrate on exporting what they are supposed to be good at; reduce the role of governments in the economy to that of supporting the market and private enterprise; and leave the determination of prices of goods, currencies, labour, as well as the allocation of resources to the operation of the market. Seen in this way, globalisation is primarily not an impersonal process driven by laws and factors of development – such as technology – operating outside human control and agency. Rather it is a conscious programme of reconstructing international economic and political relations in line with a particular set of interests (the profit motivations of the businesses, especially the transnational corporations of the advanced industrial countries) and vision (the dogma of the primacy of the free-market and of private enterprise in all processes of human development).

For Africa, all the central planks of the process of globalisation have been implemented over the past decade and a half as structural adjustment programmes. Countries have deregulated foreign investment, liberalised their imports, removed currency controls, emasculated the direct economic role of the state, and so on. The results have been to further undermine the internal, national productive capacity, social security and democratic integrity of these countries. So that is basically how globalisation has impacted on Africa.

Photo by Peter Williams - WCC

In Africa, women have mostly been involved in farming, in employment as civil servants, and in industry. They have also been involved in small scale entrepreneurships. No doubt, these sectors have been severely affected by the introduction of trade liberalisation. Women on this continent are the most critical factor in agricultural production and agriculture. Yet liberalisation has failed to ensure the availability of credit, agricultural inputs such as fertilisers and insecticides at affordable prices. The marketing of their produce has been thrown in the hands of businessmen whose sole objective is profit maximisation. The result – food security in Africa is highly threatened. Women constitute 60% percent of the communal farmers in Zimbabwe. In rural areas the impact has been so serious that rural urban migration has increased to unfortunate proportions. This in turn has led to the increase of squatters in urban areas and crime which affects mostly women and children.

In Zimbabwe, some women have resorted to cross-border trade. This has had its own social and cultural repercussions. Children in this case are left out of parental care and the number of rape cases on young children has become an alarming cause of concern. In Zimbabwe alone, there is an average of 4 reported cases of rape every day. In other cases there have been reports of married women getting involved in extra-marital affairs once they cross the border while the spouses they have left behind indulge in the same, complicating and worsening the AIDS pandemic situation. Children no longer sit around the fireplace in the evening to listen to stories that promote the values of respect, integrity, peace, love and unity, even in the rural areas where this sort of environment would fit best. People – men, women and children are all engrossed and embroiled in the struggle for survival – the struggle to get a bowl of mealie meal to fill the tummy at least for the day.

In the township where I stay, children as young as 6 years can be seen moving around selling oranges, tomatoes and other basic foodstuffs as late as 8.00pm. During my grandmother's generation, most African communities had a strong policy on food security. If you walk through my village, you will find a silos in each family compound. Today, most of these are empty – people have been forced into a situation where they are living from hand to mouth. Even the middle-class working elite have run into a habit of borrowing their salaries/wages even before they receive them. There is so much to spend on! But the amazing issue is that of ignorance. Even the rich and well-to-do have no clue about the system that has invaded the African continent. Or even if they are aware, they have either chosen to overlook the overall implication or have decided that they are also benefactors of the system. The sale of a shirt made outside Zimbabwe is more certain than a locally manufactured one. "Import" is the in term. Ladies who wear per-

fume from Paris and shoes from Italy tend to receive more respect than those wearing a locally manufactured brand. Children in rich families are too busy involved in video games, international schools that offer English and other "international" languages, television and movies whose content is 90% from outside the country.

Song and dance has become characterised with themes of AIDS, orphans, suffering, drought and war. These have been neutralised with the western beats of Michael Jackson et al. The youth prefer the western beats to the local artists and hair styles, shoes and clothing keep to the trends on the western fashion scene. Those who are slow are left behind and everyone seems to be in such a big rush not to remain behind. Women's economic activities have therefore been highly affected by globalisation. In Malawi, whereas before rice was produced and sold in most Southern African countries, it is now brought in from Asia and sold at much cheaper prices than the locally produced one. The local production is therefore forced to stop.

Women are very concerned about the impact of economic structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) on their human rights. It is not just a question of economics, it is the whole issue of human dignity. Dignity is inherent in the fact of being a human being. With this, we have also witnessed tremendous changes in the global economy and in the political climate that contextualises it. The current neoliberal model has resulted in the introduction of policies aimed at eliminating all obstacles to the "free" exercise of economic activity across boundaries including trade liberalisation, the deregulation of production, the market of labour, goods and services and the implementation of regional and international agreements.

Before the advancement of free economic activity on the national, regional and global levels, most of the African economies were heavily regulated by the state. Under this system, they introduced such import and export restrictive business practices as import and export licensing, increased import duties, taxes or levies on import transactions, allocation of foreign exchange to essential goods, import and export quotas and other prohibitions. This forced the creation of local and locally manufactured goods produced from local materials. Self reliance was encouraged. However, this has now been replaced by donor-driven deregulation, economic liberalisation and privatisation of the national economic activities. The argument has been that this new policy will bring about faster export and economic growth which will enable developing countries to repay the mounting external debt burden accumulated since the independence of these countries.

It is unfortunate that the "globalisation theory"

assumes that all players, men and women, rich and poor, will be affected equally. Furthermore, it also assumes that international trade opportunities open up equally to small scale firms, infant industries and the giant transnational corporations (TNCs) and cartels.

However the seven years of globalisation indicate otherwise because international trade is also to do with people's livelihoods and their most basic social and economic rights. For millions of Africa's poorest people, trade is part of daily life, and a crucial determinant of welfare. When a people's social and economic rights and patterns are affected, their culture is overall affected too. Trade which is built on the unacceptable levels of social inequities to vulnerable communities and groups, or causes global ecological or environmental damage and disregards our obligations to future generations is not conducive to sustainable development. Established and large companies such as TNCs came in and brought in their finished goods at much cheaper prices than those of our own manufacturers, thus forcing many local industries to close down. In Zimbabwe, the clothing sector was hardest hit with the closure of the local Cone Textiles, which retrenched hundreds of workers. These workers were family breadwinners with children in school and houses to pay rent for. Because of the tight labour market, most of them are frustrated and disillusioned, with no work and money. The importation and cheap selling of second hand clothes from Europe has forced many women out of their businesses. In Kenya, the women who were involved in the manufacturing of the famous "kiondos" (sisal bags) were negatively affected when the sisal bags were produced en masse in Japan and sold in East Africa and the surrounding countries at low prices.

In Mali, foreign investors were able to take over the major revenue enterprises such as tobacco and textile industries, not to mention the only national airline. In Cameroon, banks, agricultural ventures and the national airlines were taken over by foreign investors. The African market has become the dumping ground for all kinds of goods from developed countries and from the East, all in the name of free trade. In Zambia, the spirits, motor and textile industries are almost dead. In Tanzania the leather and textile industries have almost collapsed.

Massive unemployment is a common phenomenon in Africa. In Zambia for example, retrenchments and liquidations have led a staggering number of over 200,000 people out of employment over a period of five years since 1992. Zimbabwe, Botswana, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and other African countries are no different. This has had a direct impact on Africa's cultural traits. In many countries, it has always been the responsibility of the man to go out and fend and provide for his family. This has changed. Men and women both leave home in search of the available labour. In fact, in cases where there are massive retrenchments, you now find men at home while women go to work. This has hence affected the household responsibilities where you find change of roles when a man has to wash and look after the children. In cases where the man goes to work, the woman is forced to become involved in supplementary activities such as sewing, selling vegetables and knitting to compliment the husband's salary. In these countries, women have suffered disproportionately from the impact of globalisation. There are very many men who have been retrenched too, but when you look at the statistics you can see the difference. A company in Lesotho, for instance, was required to lay off 50% of its work force, and it ended laying off all the women workers. Under SAPs states are required to reduce public spending. The immediately affected areas are health and education. In most of our African societies, it is the responsibility of the women to take care of the health not only of themselves, but also of the children in the home.

Many girls have dropped out of school because their families cannot afford to pay all the school fees. Zimbabwe has not yet seen the full extent of this trend. But people from Ghana or Uganda who have lived under SAPs for many years and whose countries have been quoted by the World Bank as "success stories" will tell you of the majority of a whole generation who have not gone to school – a majority most of whom are women. In Africa, there is a limit to your capacity to enjoy your rights if you have not gone to school. It means that you may not get a job and therefore your economic rights (which are basic human rights) are affected. The first challenge facing women today is education. Education must empower women with knowledge of their rights and how to seek redress should such rights be violated.

In conclusion, the North must revise its conception of development. Economic growth without social and cultural justice cannot be our idea of development. It is imperative that development be measured in terms of the quality of human life, which can be reflected in, for example, better edu-

Data gathered from research in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, the Middle East and Latin America on the impact of structural adjustment programmes on women indicate that:

- an increasing number of women look for income-generating work outside the home to compensate for the husband's loss of job, less steady income and/or sharp fall in family purchasing power;
- more women than men may become unemployed;
- working conditions for women deteriorate;
- wage differentials between men and women grow;
- as the formal sector of employment diminishes, more women enter the informal sector;
- women do not experience increasing employment as a result of export promotion of manufactured goods; export cropping often does not benefit in terms of paid work, better economic status, or bargaining power within the household;
- women's unpaid work escalates with structural adjustment cut backs in social services, higher prices for basic necessities, unemployment and job insecurity;
- progress in girls' education slows as women's unpaid work becomes heavier and mothers ask them to assist in the home;
- food consumption diminishes as a result of rising food prices and changing agriculture policies;
- girls' health and mortality rates worsen as a result of the above; women's reliance on credit places them under greater pressure by creditors to pay back debts;
- an increased number of women are heads of household; and
- many women lose the support of the extended family as families become nuclear.*

** Pamela Sparr, editor (1994). Mortgaging Women's Lives. London and New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.: 20-29.*

Photo : WCC

cation, health and life expectancy for every single member of society. This is only possible if men and women are equally empowered, in theory and in practice. And the North has a crucial role to play in this process. Anything that falls short of restoring a peoples' dignity, sense of identity, continuity and security should never be accepted. Africa needs to learn to respect the dissenting voice of its own people. And at the same time, the North needs to take heed of the saying of the African people: "Shonyala okhumanya inzu yowasio tawe".

Ms Fridah Muyale-Manenji is a journalist, poet and writer and is the Communications & Networking Officer at the African Development Education Network Secretariat, Harare, Zimbabwe.

GREETINGS

Bantu Mwaura

KOU MEN OU YE, DOMINICA!
Let Jah Jah protect his children
From neo-slavemasters,
People of the earth,
PWEN EZEE!

OI, BRAZIL! TODO BEM?
Let not the people
Be strangled by the coffee economy,
Poor people of the earth,
AXE!

TALOFA, SAMOA!
Let unity prevail
Among your people
Troubled people of the world,
MANUIA.

KUMUSTA KA, FILIPINO?
Let the street children
Be saved from slavery, selling sampaguita.
Children of the world,
KAPAYAPAAN ANG SUMAINYO!

BONJOUR CANADA!
Let us stop the imperialists
From consuming humanity.
People of the earth,
BE BLESSED!

KIA ORA, AOTEAROA!
Let us stop the ogres
From swallowing the soil.
Soil of the earth,
KIA ORA!

GOEDAG, HOLLAND!
Let us stop
The separation of colours.
Colours of the world,
VREDE EN ALLE GOEDS!

JAMBO, KENYA!
Let us give the people
The freedom to lay their table.
Real democracies of the world,
AMANI, NA MAISHA MAREFU!

Globalisation and the social clause debate

by Robert Reid

WTO - Photo by Peter Wi

Globalisation, we are told, is with us whether we like it or not. The effects of globalisation are certainly felt by workers throughout the world. But how to react to globalisation? That is an issue that is being hotly debated by trade unions. Much of the debate has centred on a proposal from unions in the "north" for a social clause in international trading agreements. However there is also much opposition to this proposal, especially from unions in the least developed countries. This short paper asks why such differences have occured.

Trade unions were born out of the class struggle, out of the contradiction between labour and capital. But the contradiction between labour and capital is not the only one that exists. While this contradiction may be fundamental in the struggle that unions are engaged in, other contradictions will interact with it and produce different results from different material conditions.

I make this point to begin a discussion on "social clauses" because the debate so far has produced much heat but little light. But in my view, to understand the different positions being put forward by trade unions around the world, we need to take into account not only the contradiction of labour and capital, but also the contradiction inherent in an imperialist international order between the major powers and the third world.

But first, what is the "social clause" and from where did it

come? What is now referred to as the "social clause" specifically relates to GATT and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), but has been used in reference to other international trade agreements as well. Its genesis comes from European and US trade unions who, for a number of years, have been raising the issue and the concept especially within the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and its International Trade Secretariats (ITSs). The idea was to take some of the basic ILO principles, such as freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, elimination of child labour, elimination of discrimination and to create an instrument within the GATT (now WTO) where the signatories to this trading agreement/organisation would also be obliged to abide by these "social clauses". Failure to do so would trigger a mechanism of reporting technical assistance to conform to the "social clause". If this failed then trading sanctions would be introduced against the offending country. The proponents argued that although the standards had already been set by the ILO, the ILO really had no teeth. By using the teeth of WTO induced trade sanctions, ILO conventions and policies might finally be forced on countries that wish to trade internationally but are ignoring such labour rights and standards.

France and the USA introduced such proposals at the dying stages of the Uruguay Round of GATT, but they created such controversy, especially by third-world governments, that they have been held over along with proposals on a "green clause" for further consideration by the WTO and the ILO.

From the point of view of first-world unions and the US and (most) European Governments these proposals made sense. Thousands of workers in these countries were losing their jobs due to the free trade policies of GATT / WTO, due to the importation of goods made with low-paid (often child) labour where trade union rights were ignored. The ILO was proving impotent at dealing with these issues. The European trade unions felt they had achieved some success with the "Social Charter" provisions of the European Union (EU) and the US trade unions with the side agreements to NAFTA.

The reactions of most third-world governments and trade unions to these proposals have been extremely hostile. This hostility has come especially from trade unions in South Asia. Interestingly enough, the poorer the country, the more hostile the reaction has been to a proposal that the first-world proponents stated was designed to improve the conditions of workers in the poorest countries. It is also of interest that the ICFTU, which is very strong in the first world, is much weaker in Africa or South Asia where major unions are either affiliated to the (formerly pro-Soviet) World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) or are independent of both international centres and have no affiliates in Vietnam, Indonesia or China. It is of further interest that moving around into South-East and East Asia, trade unions that have discussed the issue are either moderate critics or critical supporters of the "social clause", again reflecting the level of development of those countries as being between the poorest third-world and the richer/developed nations.

If trade unions from the richer countries are genuine in their motives of promoting the social clause, they should be listening to the concerns of unions from the parts of the world that they are claiming they want to assist.

Of final interest is that ideologically opposed left- and right-wing trade union centres in the same country often have the same position on this issue. For example all trade union centres in India, whether pro-Congress Party, pro-Hindu fundamentalist, pro-socialist or pro-communist oppose the "social clause". In South Korea, both the conservative FKTU and the militant KCTU are critical supporters of the "social clause".

So what is the objection of those who oppose the "social clause"? For third-world governments, it is seen as a new form of protectionism of the rich countries against the poor. When it is often only low labour costs that give such countries a comparative advantage in the globalised free-trading economy, third-world leaders point to the "social clause" as the mechanism that the rich countries are using to deprive them of this advantage.

Most third-world trade unions try to demarcate themselves from this government position. They state that their governments are antagonistic to the conditions and plight of workers in their country and that the wages and conditions of the workers must be raised. However the "social clause" is not the mechanism to do it.

How can we support a "social clause", say these trade unions, in an organisation such as the WTO which has been set up as an instrument of imperialist global rule to ensure that the people of the third-world remain subjugated to the plans for global dominance of the TNCs and the global elite? How can we support a "social clause" in the WTO at the same time that the IMF and the World Bank are forcing their structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) on us that are reducing the rights and conditions of workers? These concerns are real. The conditionalities of many SAPs on third-world countries have called for a cut in government spending on social and educational programmes and elimination of subsidies on many basic goods. This has meant that the social wage and workers' living conditions have been reduced dramatically. Other conditionalities have insisted that labour market

flexibility is increased and therefore the power of trade unions curtailed. So will a "social clause" under the WTO now introduce trade sanctions against these countries because of their governments being forced to introduce anti-worker policies by the WTO's sibling organisations, the IMF-WB?

And what competence does the WTO have to decide on issues of labour rights? The WTO is not a democratic body. The richest nations and TNCs control the WTO processes. Any decisions it makes will not be in the interests of workers but of international capital and the rich nations. There are other international bodies such as the ILO and the UN, which although not perfect, are far more democratic and competent at dealing with issues of international worker rights than the WTO.

The trade unions opposing the social clause are not simply opposing it and putting up no alternatives. For example, a series of meetings of trade unions and labour-orientated NGOs in South Asia have developed a South Asia Workers Charter in an effort to set a series of minimum standards for workers in the sub-continent through a mechanism that will not involve imperialist intervention from outside the region.

If trade unions from the richer countries are genuine in their motives of promoting the social clause, they should be listening to the concerns of unions from the parts of the world that they are claiming they want to assist. Unfortunately, so far this does not seem to be happening. Opposing views from the third-world are often being ignored and ridden over with the same arrogance that propels the imperialist masters from these countries to shape the new global world in their own image and for their own enrichment.

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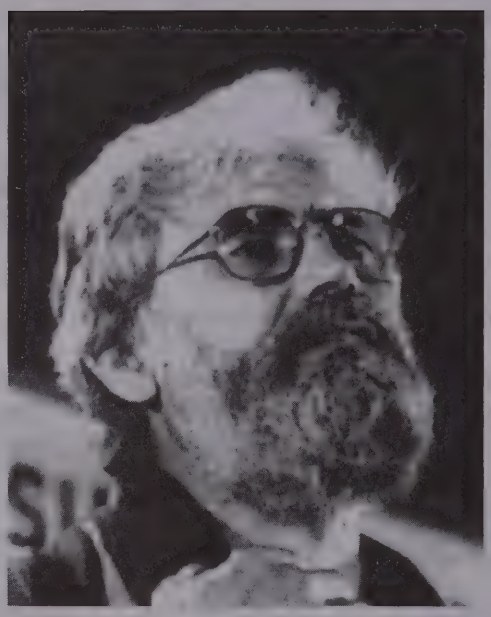


A new alliance between humankind and nature

An interview with Leonardo Boff,

by Jether Ramalho

We need a new state of awareness in humankind that we are part and parcel of nature, so that we can build up a relationship of goodwill, solidarity and love with the earth. So thinks the theological teacher and writer, Leonardo Boff. In this interview he dares to view religion as a solution to help humans to be sensitive, merciful, gentle and friendly towards all that is in the universe and towards one another.

There is much talk of sustainable development. Do you think that this concept is itself sustainable?

The phrase 'sustainable development' is more confusing than enlightening, because it obscures the contradiction inherent in the words themselves. What sort of development, what sort of sustainability are we talking about? The idea of development is taken from the field of economics. Not from any school of economics you might think of, but from the ruling school of economics, which is capitalist. In fact, it should be called 'linear growth', the accumulating of material goods and services, without any greater consideration of the social and environmental costs. It results in social inequality, environmental imbalance, spiritual poverty and poor quality of life. "Sustainability" comes from the fields of biology, cosmology and ecology. It takes account of the network of interdependency, association and cooperation existing between all animate and inanimate beings. The basic characteristic of life is

cooperation, rather than the competition which Darwin emphasized. Sustainability arises from the dynamic balance set up by the web of cooperative relationships. Bringing together these two contradictory concepts does not help us to understand a process for the production of goods for living which must not destroy our capital of natural resources and make it impossible for future generations adequately to meet their needs and preferences.

What is the place of values in the debate on sustainable development?

The question of values arises when we ask ourselves this : how do we picture humankind, the society and the future which we wish to build by means of development? The image of humankind underlying the developmentalist approach in the modern world is a poverty-stricken one. It views human beings as mere producers and consumers of material goods. It has no heart, no compassion, no sense of solidarity, no sensitivity to catch the message coming from the universe, from the depths of the eyes of a child and from the deepest desires of the human heart. Logically, these values belong to the fabric of existence itself and are expressed in one form or another in the lives of individuals and society. But society is not organised around these values, nor does it create the material and spiritual conditions for us to live them out. We need to have a broader view of what humankind is and give expression to the three fundamental elements which enable humankind to be sustainable, that is, our physical dimension, our psychological dimension and our spiritual dimension. That could result in a human society which would enable human beings to sparkle and live as sons and daughters of happiness and not as captives in a vale of tears.

There is much talk of a crisis of paradigms. What would be the basis of a new paradigm?

There would be many. I would simply stress one, and that is the capacity to re-establish relationships. Either we relate again to one another, understand the universe as a web of very complex relationships, nature as a tissue of subtle connections where everything has to do with everything else at all times and in all situations, and human society as being built upon multi-directional networks of relationships, or else we shall experience the fate of the dinosaurs, who disappeared because they were incapable of relating to a changed situation. Out of this capacity and need to relate and re-establish relationships, there will be born a renewed understanding of religion (religion is all about relationships) as that human institution which is a repository of the experience through the ages that everything is related to the Supreme Reality, thus creating a sense of life and the universe as one global reality.

The basic characteristic of life is cooperation, rather than the competition which Darwin emphasized.

You are suggesting a new paradigm for civilisation, based on an alliance between humankind and nature. How would this alliance come about?

It is coming about through a new state of awareness in humankind that we are part and parcel of nature; or, to put it better, that we are sons and daughters of the Earth; or, to put it even better, that we are the Earth itself, which has attained in us and for us the level of reflective consciousness, of movement together, of thought, of growing in love, of worship. All the new knowledge in the earth sciences strengthens this new awareness. The process of globalisation, and our taking on board the ability to see the Earth from outside (as astronauts have seen it, as disseminated by the media in many songs) and even the danger of environmental breakdown – all these support the emergence of this new state of awareness. It provides a foundation for us to build up a relationship of goodwill, solidarity and love with the Earth. It is the new alliance of the formerly alienated rebellious sons and daughters with the Earth, which is their common father/motherland.

How could limits be placed on power?

The insatiable appetite for power will not be restrained by categorical imperatives, punitive laws or control systems. It is indwelt by a demon which makes power always want more power. It is limited by two things: self-destruction and the power of the numinous. Self-destruction is an obvious limitation. The instinct for self-preservation is the root power and condition for all other sorts of power to be possible. But there is in humankind an element which is also power, but power of another kind, an overwhelming power, because it irresistibly compels everyone, and that is the power of the numinous.

The numinous is that upsurge of passion, feeling, light, attraction and inner fire, which no one can resist. Passion for the loved one erupts in someone like a volcano. People's state of awareness changes and they are taken over by a demon which does not leave them in peace asleep or awake. As the Sufi mystic, the greatest mystic of love, Rumi, said, 'When love draws near to me, I am so happy

I do not sleep. When it departs from me, I weep so much I do not sleep.' Or, before charismatic personalities we are at the mercy of the power emanating from them and we surrender. Investigators of the phenomenon of the numinous say that it is awesome and fascinating and that its effect is to rob all other powers of their power so as to make room for this new power, an uncorrupted power, that is, one that is not destructive, but irresistible. This experience gives birth to enchantment, enthusiasm, worship and respect. It is Moses removing his sandals before the burning bush. It is Peter so fascinated by Jesus that he says to him, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man.' Now, the whole modern world has attempted to contain and even to stifle the numinous. It has created a society of the disenchanted. Its legacy is the arid wilderness in which we now live. For us to place limits on the modern world's will to power and domination, an essential condition is that we recover this sense of the numinous. We begin with an element outside this type of power, with the power of the numinous.

Religions have expressed the numinous by creating rituals, symbols, festivals and figurative language, so that we can live with it without it destroying us. They are the guardians of the sacred flame of the numinous, which is overlaid with ashes in our personal and collective subjectivity. I long for religions to discover their historic mission to call forth this experience in people, to name it with the name we worship, calling it God, Yahweh, Allah, Tao, Olorum..., and so enable us to build forms of power, uncorrupted power, as little destructive as possible of ourselves and nature, and conducive to benevolent attitudes of goodwill, compassion and growth in love.

What do you mean by 'spiritual ecology'?

Human beings have a physical dimension, which is the object of the physical/chemical medical care given by doctors. We have a psychic dimension, which is our inner universe of instincts, passions, emotions, archetypes, great dreams and visions, and which our psychotherapists subject to analysis and therapy. And, lastly, we have a spiritual dimension, which is our human capacity to adopt values, generate meaning, and articulate visions of the universe, history and ourselves as one whole, a capacity to hear the messages coming to us from all sides, but mostly from the depths of our own hearts. Everything speaks to us and is charged with information and messages.

But who listens to them? Human beings are those unique beings which can decode them and make them part of their inner being. They are capable of asking themselves what lies behind all phenomena and the entire universe. They ask questions about Being itself. The obscure object of their deep-rooted desire is not one thing or another: it is the Supreme Being. That is the name of God, who is revealed, not as an abyss, but as an infinite womb of gentleness and love. To pray is to immerse ourselves in the source where God is communicated. To pray for others is to link them again with that same source, so that they may arise and be healed. It is important to express these three dimensions: physical, mental and spiritual. Then we shall feel ourselves more fulfilled and in harmony with the symphony of the whole universe.

How can religion be responsible for the perdition or for the redemption and salvation of the Earth?

I believe that the essential mission of religion today is to convey salvation. It is religion's task to fuel the sacred lamp of the numinous. It is its task to fan into flame the inner embers overlaid with the ashes of pleasure-seeking, indifference, consumerism and materialism. It belongs to religion to dare to give a name to that inner Fire. Its name is God, Yahweh, Creator Spirit, Olorum, Allah, Tao... The names are not important, but the reality of its presence is. If religion succeeds in fulfilling this mission, it will help humans to be sensitive, merciful, gentle and friendly towards all that is in the universe and towards one another. Then the Earth will not merely be 'nature' but 'Creation', an expression of that superabundant Energy which is God. That love, which according to the greatest of Italian poets, Dante Alighieri, moves the heavens, the stars, the earth, all that is, and our own hearts. The Earth will have a future because it is loved by God and is part of God's universal kingdom.

For us to place limits on the modern world's will to power and domination, an essential condition is that we recover this sense of the numinous.

Leonardo Boff is a theologian, professor and writer. He was interviewed by Jether Ramalho, editor of the magazine "Tempo e Presença" of Koinonia: Ecumenical Presence and Service, an ecumenical organisation based in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and assistant editor of "Contexto Pastoral". This interview was first published in "Contexto Pastoral" and is reprinted with kind permission.

Translated from the Portuguese, WCC language service.

THEY ARE TAKING TO THE STREETS IN 'CLEAN GREEN' AOTEAROA-NEW ZEALAND.

Marching in the streets, banners waving, crowds chanting, politicians being slandered and circulating petitions was the scene in many Aotearoa-New Zealand provincial towns and cities over the past few weeks. Middle Aotearoa-New Zealand, the people who a few years ago "never had it so good", are disgruntled, angry and frustrated. They fear the reality of a comprehensive accessible health and welfare system is gone for good.

It was in this national atmosphere that I spent ten days recently travelling through the country with New Zealander, the Reverend Bob Scott of the World Council of Churches, Unit III for Justice Peace and Creation. We were in conversation with church and community groups and leaders examining how the globalisation process, now in full song, is a driving force behind the changes giving rise to local dissent.

Until now the radical surgery required by the global reform agenda has by passed most New Zealanders and their politicians. But now the peoples' stories speak of their loss of power to oppose the driving agenda. Local incidents such as the withdrawal of dialysis services from a dying man become a national issue, a sign that all is not right. Middle class people now look to joining the poor and the disenfranchised, instead of sharing in the benefits of the so-called wealth creators.

During the tour Bob Scott often commented that, "the drivers of the reform processes have a

very clear agenda but they have no vision. Economic power has supplanted political power." It was clear to us that many New Zealanders are driven by the agenda of economic power and have given away the need for regaining a common vision. The exception are Maori, many of whom are clear about their values and their bottom line for a just and equitable society to progress Maori aspirations and traditions.

The churches last published a Church Leaders Statement on Social Justice in 1993. It is obvious it is now in need of reconstruction, recommitment and redistribution. In the meantime some church leaders have been successfully courted and incorporated into the systems of power and reform which the 'Business Roundtable' (representatives of New Zealand's 25 top companies) has tried to legitimate with assistance of North American and British theologians. Scott cheekily referred to the "cathedral of the Roundtable with its economic bishops of pious economic language".

In the meantime the people in the marches are saying to their politicians "Take back the power we gave you at the ballot box. Stop allying yourselves with the international forces which bring death to provincial and poor people, people of colour, aged people and single mothers!" They know that the low-tax minimal state regime of the OECD, GATT, WTO, APEC, and now the WTO-sponsored Multi-lateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), promotes an ideology of scarcity while supporting excessive compensation for people with so-called entrepreneurial skill. These so-called risk takers are so far from the realities of the common people, and so surrounded by a loyal entourage of shielded and unconscious servants, that only political control will discourage the excessive plundering and destruction of publicly funded systems of welfare and health care.

The fundamentalism of the present global reform ideology, with its unquestioning faith in simplistic reductions in the power of the state, imposes a hierarchical and totalitarian system which requires absolute adherence to its values. New Zealanders have witnessed them in action. Those values place self at the centre, rewarding those who, through competition and enterprise, accumulate wealth for themselves and their cohorts by denying redistribution through the tax system to the 'people'. Freedom of choice, free from considerations of the common good, moves the managers and beneficiaries of the reforms away from communal visions of equity and fairness to self preservation and an absence of justice. In John Ralston Saul's phrase they become "the unconscious civilisation".

Globalisation has moved with impunity across the boundaries of this nation state to corrupt the national psyche, values and traditions requiring long-held cultural norms to be set aside.

New Zealanders have experienced the seductive and all-pervasive nature of the reform process since it was introduced in 1984 under a left-leaning government. Globalisation has moved with impunity across the boundaries of this nation state to corrupt the national psyche, values and traditions requiring long-held cultural norms to be set aside. Maori have reacted most strongly to the invasion of their cultural space and their rights as Indigenous People over their taonga, or treasures, including the fauna and flora of the land, music, art forms and medicines.

The way forward for Aotearoa-New Zealand is to respond with a vision for the future around which alliances can be built – another thing Scott was stressing during the tour. Some of these will provide the platform for vision building and concerted allied action. Externally the vision needs to be built with nations and groups who seek to supplant the agenda of the right with a vision of incorporation and justice which manifests itself in political action.

New Zealanders have participated in two major victories over fascism and exploitation in this century's two world wars. Now the battle is within each country's national boundary and across all of them. Those who rally in the towns and cities around the war memorials to New Zealand's past struggles for a free world must now commit themselves again to a coherent vision based on the common good, the just distribution of the nation's wealth, the care of its most vulnerable citizens and the power of the citizens' democracy to stand against the forces of global domination.

Jim Greenaway,
Commission on Social Justice,
Anglican Church,
Aotearoa-NewZealand

Churches and Faith Organisations on the Internet

by Heinz Hunke

Photo: WCC

Over the past three to five years, the Internet has become a major player in the mass media and this in two specific ways: it has been treated like an "elite person", with almost daily stories in newspapers and news magazines while, at the same time, the mass media have trumpeted that they too are now available on the World Wide Web (WWW). It has been like the announcement of a new age dawning under the sign of the Internet, the "Net", or the "Web". "Cyber gurus" are read with the zeal of addicts and there was even a hoax story on the Web that Microsoft had bought the Vatican.

According to the Clinton administration, a new democracy based on information and communication has the power to change the world thanks to a new global information infrastructure which would enhance development, progress, education, and offer communication by all with all.

The reality is different. After all the "hype", there was a period of "down". Slow connections, access lines that broke down, and in content the penetration of crime, from terrorism to paedophilia, made the Internet a supermarket beset with problems, some of a very serious nature.

The Internet seems to be the *Agora* of our world, a forum in which churches and cults, science and scientologists, art and pornography, charities and even organised crime address the public. Is this really true? Can "the Word" also be spread in this way?

It seems strange that churches and Christian organisations have for a long time been rather suspicious of or reluctant to take up the opportunities offered by electronic communication. The church-linked NGOs and action groups in particular have had an ideological bias for a long time: computer use was seen as part of the ensnaring giant octopus of the North American transnationals, especially of IBM, the 'Big Brother' against which the only effective defence consists in total abstinence. A "critical" attitude towards technologies (except for "appropriate" ones) was widespread.

An additional motive of solidarity organisations was that these electronic means would never be affordable in the South, and therefore were to be excluded for reasons of solidarity. It may be for these reasons that some outstanding Christian agencies are still absent from the Internet *Agora* (except for some notes of presentation on different sites). One of them carried in its publication an article about Internet with the revealing title: "Internet the web without God and without master".

The Internet seems to be the *Agora* of our world, a forum in which churches and cults, science and scientologists, art and pornography, charities and even organised crime address the public. Is this really true? Can "the Word" also be spread in this way?

But while these motives were still dominant among Northern groups, peoples' organisations in the South equipped themselves with computers and the know-how of electronic communication. Already in 1984, during the founding meetings of Interdoc, an informal network of NGOs from all continents for mutual support in electronic networking, participants from Asia and Latin America were able to teach their Northern colleagues the secrets of the new communication tool.

In the higher circles of the official church, the new technology was looked at from a distance: a new tool, apparently complicated since it had to do with computers, nothing urgent since there was already telephone, fax, and a lot of money for meetings. "We have an open mind, but we can do without it," said the Pope of the "*Agora* of modern times" long before the Catholic Church had begun to build her home pages.

In churches and church groups, convinced individuals introduced the new technologies step by step, with the stubbornness of their own vision set against the suspicion, indifference, and benevolent derision of superiors and colleagues. Four years ago, at a global ecumenical meeting, two participants invited to explain electronic networking, were smilingly introduced to the assembly as if they were freaks. The result was predictable: no one wanted to know.

The exponential growth of the Internet and the steady extension of its backbone has changed that situation. The last two years have seen the creation of numerous church and church-related home pages on the World Wide Web. Many church letterheads now carry an E-mail address. Yet there are still many barriers to be overcome before we can speak of a satisfactory presence of the churches on the Internet. Now it is no longer a question of prejudice in the churches (healthy scepticism does not mean abstention), but rather the severe limitations of Internet access.

It is impossible to give exact figures of church and Christian organisations using electronic communication, having either an E-mail account on a local or re-

gional host, or using the services of an Internet provider, or even being a full node of Internet itself.

A search among the users of the global Association of Progressive Communication (APC) network of mainly NGOs yields almost three hundred E-mail addresses of individuals or groups with the keyword "church". Ignoring some 10% false hits (where "church" would refer to a name or a street), it is still a significant number if one considers that APC is an important network but just one of several. Many Christian groups in the South are in regional Fidonets.

If we widen the search to "religion", we find many sites of sects and cults, most of them around the galaxy of New Age.

In spite of the difficulties in getting an overall detailed and accurate global panorama one can conclude that the church's presence on the electronic communication highways is considerable. But it comes across as a divided and segmented church. Next to the mainstream churches there are hundreds of sites of small church communities. Next to ecu-menical sites are those of strongly fundamentalist Christian groups. And there are also "churches" of a dubious nature, like the "churches of Satan".

An examination of the variety of addresses and their short descriptions by WWW search engines creates the impression that smaller church groups and evangelical faith communities are proportionately well represented on the Web. A good number of these sites indicate a missionary outreach, and spiritual and prayer-centred messaging. Maybe not by kilobytes of information and resource material offered, or not even by the total number of Web pages, but certainly by counting just the sites one has the impression that church communities of an evangelical outlook are the strongest single portion of the varied spectrum of Christian sites, outranking official church sites, theological faculties and research and/or pastoral institutes, publications, local church communities (dioceses, parishes), Christian action groups, etc. It seems that evangelical Christians, with their pronounced desire to communicate – and contrary to their often stereotyped image of being technophobic – have made early and ample use of the electronic communication age.

Today, when particularisms, group individualism, confessional fundamentalism and ethnic exclusivism are the greatest dangers to humanity, the promotion of communication at all levels is the most urgent of social *diakonia* of the church.

There is also a strong presence of right-wing Christians on the Web. Searches combining terms like church and league, church and front, church and defence, yield a high result. Their main concerns are abortion and bioethics, immigration, law and order, sometimes there is clear anti-Semitism. Their sites are part of moral campaigns. But while traditionally the printed pamphlets of these crusaders were rather stern and dull, the home pages of many of these groups are well done and are attractively designed.

The traditional self-understanding of the church is that of a locally circumscribed number of people convoked by God into a new assembly (Ekklesia of God in Antiochia, in Jerusalem, in Alexandria). From the beginning the Church was local and particular before it was universal and ecumenical. Also hierarchical roles have always been linked to definite local structures: the Patriarch of Alexandria, the Bishop of Rome (the Pope), the Archbishop of Canterbury (the Anglican Primate), or the Synod of the Evangelical Church of South India.

The electronic church is no longer territorial, no longer a parish or a synod or a diocese. The Cyber-community, or virtual community, knows no territorial demarcations and no hierarchies. The sense of pioneering and of belonging to a new elite creates something like a new secular form of religious orders. They exist within the communicative streams of the electronic network in a certain opposition to the generally felt absence of communication and communication structures in the traditional churches where horizontal interactivity has always been problematic.

The virtual community is also based on individual decisions in favour of interactivity and exists only when that interactivity is actualised. Telecommunion in the Internet age is thus characterised by a general process of individualisation and privatisation on all levels of society. The public sphere shrinks in favour of a greater private sphere. The church's public worship (*leitourgia* = public service) is losing ground. This general trend is amplified in virtual community networking. A strong degree of individualisation is taking place in the telecom age. This also signifies a personal distancing from the "real" local and official church body.

This tendency may be less dra-

matic or traumatic for "free churches", for charismatic groupings with traditionally loose social boundaries and institutional structures, perhaps also in many Protestant churches with their emphasis on the individual facing the word of God, but it may be a great danger in the Catholic tradition of the Anglican and the Roman Catholic Church with their emphasis on the visible community structure.

The non-territorial and non-hierarchical fluctuation of the virtual community excludes controls, regimentation, a watch dog of orthodoxy, a tribunal for excommunication. In some cases this may well lead to a reduction of community and commonness as a sharing of tastes, opinions, and witnesses, one equally important as the other, none of them obliging, all indiscriminately acceptable, the main relevancy consisting in contributing to the richness of the variety.

It would be pessimistic and completely mistaken to see only negative and disastrous developments and outcomes. Numerous virtual communities live and prosper because of open and uncensored exchange of experiences, understandings, visions, and prospects. Inspiration, by and work on, the text of tradition and reflections on theological implications are carried out under no institutional authority, yet are taken seriously by members of discussion groups.

The global information and communication infrastructure may revive or remodel the antagonism between mother and daughter churches, between sending churches and "mission churches". What kind of solidarity is necessary between communication-privileged and communication-under-privileged churches and faith organisations? Important ecumenical church sites in the North could host home pages of churches in the South. Electronic networking can also be done by sending diskettes which can be up-loaded on home pages or in "conferences" or fora. On the other hand, certain specialised "conferences" or fora could be down-loaded and sent on diskettes to groups with E-mail but without Internet connection.

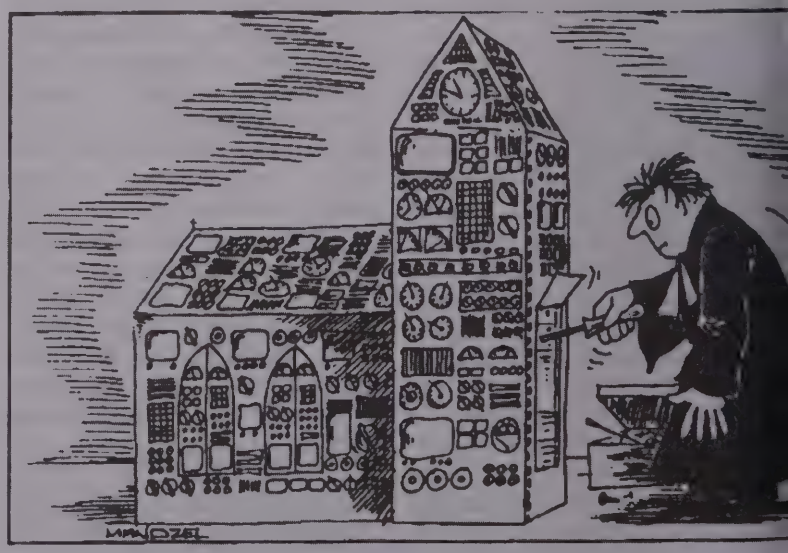
An ecumenical form of "Interdoc"* could become an instrument of promoting all efforts by the communication-under-privileged to gain E-mail and E-netting capacities. This could imply an exchange of expertise and of simple information on what is feasible in certain areas.

Within their own societies, churches must promote all means which enhance communication channels in civil society. Today, when particularisms, group individualism, confessional fundamentalism and ethnic exclusivism are the greatest dangers to humanity, the promotion of communication at all levels is the most urgent of social *diakonia* of the church. One could think, for example, of church-sponsored civil communication kiosks where, at an affordable price, people who might otherwise be marginalised by the new information and communication technologies could gain access to telephone, fax, E-mail, and information resources on the Internet. This would presuppose, however, a North-South and South-South sharing of resources to an extent hitherto unknown.

* Founded in 1984, Interdoc is an informal network of development-oriented documentation centres.

This article is extracted from a report compiled by Heinz Hunke, Secretary-General of the International Documentation and Communication Centre (IDOC), Rome, prepared for the international workshop on "Globalisation and Electronic Communication, Seoul, Korea, June 1997.

Source: IDOC Internaz



Globalisation and Climate Change

by David G. Hallman

There are many environmental impacts of economic globalisation: transnational corporations moving operations to developing countries to avoid the stricter environmental regulations of their home country; free trade agreements which restrict the capacity of national governments to adopt environmental legislation; destruction of southern rainforests to provide exotic timber for northern consumers and to create pasture land for beef for northern hamburgers. The issue of climate change is one that is particularly intriguing because it encompasses so many ecological, social, economic, political and ethical aspects. Climate change has been the focus of a WCC programme for almost ten years.[1]

By definition, climate change is a global issue. The composition of the atmosphere which surrounds the planet is altering as a result of the emissions of tons of polluting gases (called greenhouse gases – GHGs) from industry, transportation, agriculture and consumer practices. With this thickening blanket of gases, the atmosphere is gradually warming. The entire planet will be affected by the climatic changes and impacts which are predicted e.g. increased droughts and floods, rising sea levels, more extreme temperatures, etc.

The willingness of countries around the world to cooperate in the negotiation of treaties to address this global problem is a positive example of globalisation, or perhaps this is better referred to as "internationalism". Intensive discussions over an 18-month period before the 1992 Rio Earth Summit led to the adoption of the

cific island still exist in twenty years?

UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Negotiations have continued subsequently to develop another agreement for more specific emission reduction targets for industrialised countries. Because these negotiations have been going so slowly, the WCC initiated a petition campaign through the churches in industrialised nations to raise the level of public support for action.

Though climate change is a global problem, people are not all equally responsible for causing it.

The industrialised nations representing less than 20% of the world's population account for nearly 90% of annual GHG emissions over the last century largely through the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas). When they signed the UN Climate Change Convention at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, industrialised countries committed themselves to stabilising their emission levels by the year 2000. Except for a few countries such as Germany and the UK, most of them will not meet this target – current projections are for a continuous increase well into the next century.

Emission levels from countries of the economic South are rising rapidly as they pursue development to meet the basic needs of their people. This places even greater responsibility on industrialised nations to work toward drastic reductions in their emissions in order for the global total to fall.

This points to one of the basic ethical dimensions of the climate change issue in the context of the global community. We must make a distinction between the 'luxury emissions of the rich' and the 'survival emissions of the poor'.

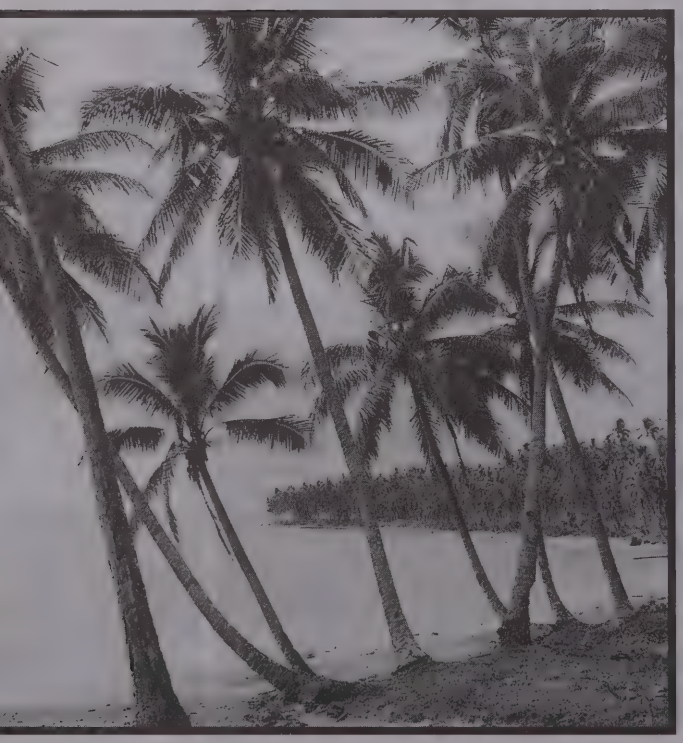
The energy-intensive consumer lifestyles of many people in industrialised countries (and elites in developing nations) are responsible for disturbing the atmospheric balance and threatening the world with major climatic disruption.

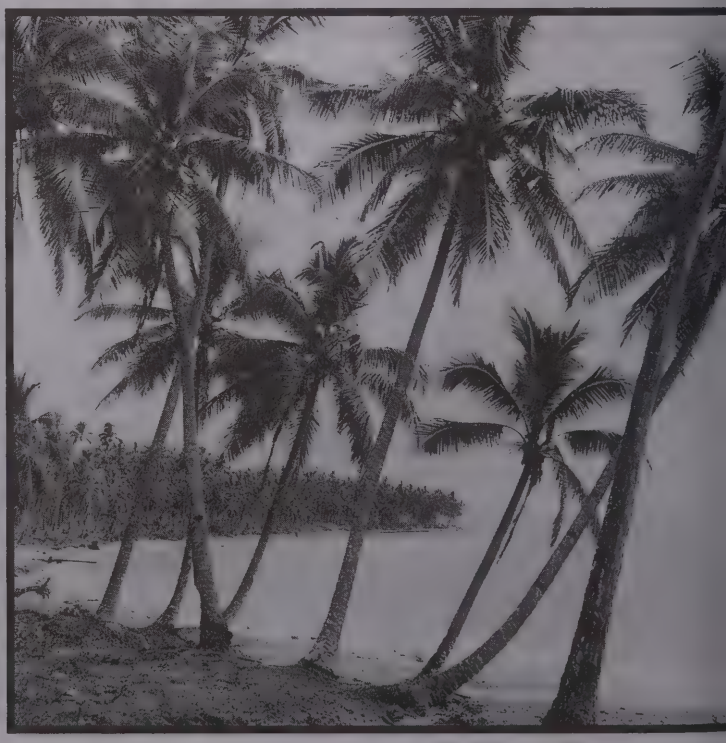
Northern consumption-oriented lifestyles and economies cannot be considered to carry the same ethical priority as Southern development strategies to provide food, water, electricity, health care, education, etc.

Many of the solutions to this global problem lie at the level of regional, national and local decision-making.

In industrialised countries, there are a wide range of steps which could be taken to increase conservation and energy ef-

Photo by Peter Williams - WCC





ficiency and thereby dramatically reduce the amount of fossil fuels used. Many technologies already exist for more efficient electrical lighting, appliances, automobiles and further technological development could occur if adequate resources were directed. Alternative, renewable energy sources are becoming more economically viable. These alternatives would already be much more economical if the hidden environmental costs of current energy sources such as fossil fuels and nuclear power were calculated into their actual cost. Urban planning designs have been developed that would reorient community living so that people were less dependent on having to use their individual automobile and public transportation would be more attractive, efficient and economical.

In the WCC's work on climate change, we have come to the conclusion that this kind of efficiency revolution is a necessary part of the long-term solution, but it will not be enough. Within industrialised societies, there also needs to be a rediscovery of the notion of sufficiency. What is adequate for a good quality of life? We perceive a growing awareness that an ever-increasing level of material consumption is no longer adding to an improved quality of life. Indeed, there are indications that there is an inverse ratio as families need to work ever more strenuously to afford the material goods advertised to them as requirements for the good life. This treadmill leaves them with an ever-diminishing sense of emotional and spiritual satisfaction through the loss of time to nurture their relationships with God, their families, the community and the natural world around them.

National governments, municipal councils, industries, families and individuals in industrialised countries could make conscious choices to move in these directions of greater efficiency and acceptance of limits of sufficiency which would result in significant reductions in energy use and hence lower GHG emission levels. Some are making such choices, but progress is slow as evidenced by the fact that most Northern countries will not meet their commitment to stabilise emission levels by the year 2000.

In the light of the growing scientific consensus about the seriousness of this global threat, it is very disturbing that progress toward limiting emission levels should be so slow in industrialised countries. In our analysis, we perceive a number of factors. There is an element of paralysis that individuals and governments experience faced with the magnitude of the problem. But there are also powerful economic forces feeding that paralysis. Commercial interests that would be hurt by a reduction in the use of fossil fuels have mounted major campaigns in western countries to convince the public and governments that taking action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions would wreak havoc with the economy and lead to significant job loss.

There are, however, an increasing number of credible studies that confirm that improvements in energy efficiency would yield ecological, social and economic benefits including increased employment opportunities. There are also industries which could benefit from such changes and they are becoming more active in the climate change debate.

Photo by Wolf Kutnahorsky - WCC

Action to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases could and should begin with steps taken by governments, industries and individuals in industrialised nations. But there are dynamics that are an intrinsic part of economic globalisation which must also be addressed. These include the dramatic increase in the transportation of goods around the world, the potential of trade agreements such as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) to limit the capacity of countries to develop domestic environmental regulations, and the proposal for bilateral climate change projects between industrialised and developing countries.

The increase in transportation of goods around the world is producing significant greenhouse gas emissions and is propelled by a number of factors. With the basically free flow of capital and investment but the relative stability of labour, transnational corporations have found it economical to have different manufacturing plants specialise in certain parts and then transport them to another location for assembly. The globalisation of automobile manufacturing is a good example. Another reason for more transportation of goods is the contemporary expectation of consumers in industrialised countries to be able to have access to a wide variety of fresh produce (e.g. vegetables, fruit and flowers) all year round.

The capacity of governments to adopt environmental legislation and regulations aimed at a range of problems, including the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, may be compromised under new trade agreements such as the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) currently being negotiated among OECD countries and other agreements within the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Standards developed by governments for various environmental purposes, such as demanding increased energy efficiency from electrical products, might be deemed as "barriers to trade". There may even be pressure for countries to eliminate current legislation.

Within industrialised societies, there also needs to be a rediscovery of the notion of sufficiency. What is adequate for a good quality of life?

Under the UN climate change negotiations, a plan has been developed to facilitate bilateral projects between industrialised and developing countries to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases in the South and increase carbon 'sinks', such as forests, which can absorb carbon dioxide. On the surface, the plan sounds most commendable. Industrialised nations would assist developing countries modernise various aspects of the manufacturing and resource sectors in order to make them more energy efficient and thus produce fewer emissions. In return, the industrialised countries would be able to count the reduced emissions in the developing country as part of their own required emission reduction target. The plan, referred to as "actions implemented jointly" (AIJ), has been the subject of great controversy. Developing countries and environmental organisations have raised a number of concerns. There is the possibility that industrialised nations may be less inclined to reduce their own emissions if they can get credit for reductions in developing countries where the costs of such action would be cheaper. Secondly, when it comes time under climate change treaties for developing countries to have to meet emission reduction targets, they could suffer financially because the cheaper options for emission reduction would have already been taken by the AIJ projects, leaving the developing countries with only much more expensive options.

The climate change issue illustrates how interrelated the world is both in terms of the causes of the problem and the options for addressing it.

Notes

1. The WCC has produced a number of resources on climate change including a 1994 study document, "Accelerated Climate Change – Sign of Peril, Test of Faith", the April 1997 issue of *The Ecumenical Review* which contains papers from a WCC consultation, and two new study documents which will be available as of January 1998, "Climate Change and the Quest for Sustainable Societies – Reflections on a WCC Study Project", and "Prospects for Sustainable Mobility."

Dr. David G. Hallman is Programme Officer on Energy & Environment for the United Church of Canada and Coordinator of the Climate Change Programme for the World Council of Churches.He is author and editor of several environmental books including Ecotheology: Voices from South and North, *WCC/Orbis, 1994.*

Framework for the Interaction of Transnationals and Indigenous People

At this years' United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, some of the Indigenous representatives (notably from Russia and Nordic countries) proposed a framework for interaction of transnational corporations and Indigenous communities.

This proposal has yet to be discussed in other forums, so cannot be regarded as the final text.

We are happy to receive comments or proposed additions to it - which we would pass on to the appropriate people.

Guided by the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants on Human Rights, and with the understanding that Indigenous Peoples have the right to their lands, territories and resources, which must be recognised and respected, and with the knowledge that transnational corporations have gained much of their power, position and profit by the exploitation of these resources, we believe that they will willingly respect the following proposed guidelines.

Proposal:
For Indigenous representatives to adopt a resolution that sets out preliminary global guidelines on the working policies, practices and directives of transnational corporations operating or funding projects in or around Indigenous communities or involving Indigenous peoples' lands, territories and resources, in order to prevent social, political or cultural conflict with Indigenous peoples.

Consent:
Gaining the free and informed consent of Indigenous peoples prior to initiating or im-

plementing development activities which directly or indirectly affect the lands, territories and resources of the peoples concerned.

Consultation:
Consulting with and directly involving Indigenous communities and their representatives in all stages of planning, assessment, implementation and conclusion of proposed development activities, to ensure that their economic, social, cultural and political rights and activities are not adversely affected by the proposed development activities.

Written agreements:
Negotiating and securing written agreements from the Indigenous peoples concerned, including but not limited to, the implementation phases, assessed ramifications and profit sharing arrangements, prior to initiation of any development activities.

(Transnationals should be encouraged to provide financial assistance to Indigenous peoples to ensure that the peoples concerned have full access to and ability to engage experts and resource peoples as members of their negotiating teams, if they so desire. Such experts shall be vetted and engaged by Indigenous peoples directly.)

Compensation:
Negotiating with the Indigenous communities a just and fair profit sharing arrangement, prior to the signing of any kind of agreement, and with full disclosure of the projected profit and complete development plans for the relevant project, to ensure that the peoples concerned receive an equitable profit share and/or compensation package.

Monitoring and recourse:
To have ongoing meetings with the Indigenous peoples concerned, throughout the duration of the project, to ensure their direct role in the monitoring of all stages and affects of the project. To provide a recourse mechanism which deals with possible disagreements over the provision of written agreements between Indigenous peoples and transnational corporations. Such body should ensure the direct participation of the Indigenous peoples concerned and give full and immediate effect to its decisions and conclusions.

Anomalies:
In the case of circumstances in which problems occur which were not part of the original assessment impact report, make immediate restitution for life, land and/or property and other damages that may have affected accidentally or through negligence.

Transparency:
Transnationals should make public through their annual reports, the economic, environmental and social impact on the communities in which they work, and data on Indigenous equity participation and where relevant, compensation packages and response times to affect compensation or restitution.

Transnationals must make transparency and public accountability a corner stone of their public relations policies and in particular, in all matters of their relations with Indigenous peoples This will lead to public trust in companies, their policies and their products.

Full application of corporate environmental policies:
All corporations should adopt environmental policies which form part of their corporate responsibility. These environmental standards should be developed in consultation with the communities affected and be rigorously applied to Indigenous areas, regardless of the status of Indigenous peoples within the relevant state.

Accountability:
Human rights issues are not an internal matter but are matters of concern of the entire international community. The transnationals that work in the countries that lack internal legal frameworks and/or administrative mechanisms capable of enforcing and/or providing such involvement of Indigenous communities, should accept a constructive obligation to respect the guidelines and the fundamental human rights of Indigenous peoples.

Financial institutions:
That all financial institutions insist on an independent environmental assessment report prior to agreeing to fund projects and that they should include:

a) the ecological, social, cultural and economic impact on Indigenous communities and peoples;
b) recommendations to eliminate or minimise negative impact; and
c) foreclosure of loans if these recommendations are not fully implemented.

Support:
With the "new partnership" as adopted by the General Assembly resolutions we request from the High Commissioners for Human Rights to support financially and assist together with us to ensure that we can develop, adopt and implement full guidelines before the year 2000.

Glimpses of the new Ecumenical Movement

by Margot Kässmann

In these last twelve months two Unit III programmes have reached their culmination. The Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women was marked by a mid-decade review process. Small teams of men and women, "living letters", visited almost all the WCC member churches to hear their plans for promoting increased leadership of women in churches.

The second was the Sokoni. The enlarged Unit III commission meeting in Nairobi, reported in issue no. 11 of ECHOES, received the reports of the Theology of Life case studies. But it was not a council of written reports and resolutions. In the spirit of Sokoni (Swahili for market place) it was a crowded, bustling week of listening and feeling, buying and selling, challenging and being challenged.

In the September 1997 Central Committee meeting of the WCC, these two Unit III processes were highlighted in a morning's plenary with African drums and Kenyan story-telling taking central place. The moderator of the Unit III Committee of the Central Committee, Dr Margot Kässmann from Germany, who herself had been involved in each process, summed up the impact of both in an address to the Central Committee.

Photo by Peter Williams - WCC

What are the lessons learned, the insights that we have to keep for the challenges ahead from the Decade visits and the Theology of Life (TOL) process?

We have gained a new approach to the relation of local and global

"Think globally, act locally", has been one of the ecumenical slogans for many years. In the 80s some people discussed whether it was time now to act globally and others even used something called "glocally". However, the tension between the local experience and reality, and the global action and reflection, has been on the agenda of the ecumenical movement since the beginning. When the New Delhi Assembly spoke of the church "in all places" it was an attempt to express the relationship and tension of being the *one* church of Jesus Christ across all boundaries of class, race, nation and, on the other hand, being the church in its full meaning in one place, at local level.

I believe that the Decade as well as TOL have found a new approach to this productive tension. The experience of people at the local level, and an approach at the international level, were closely linked. The *Sokoni* was not a meeting taking place in an artificial conference centre, but the global agenda being discussed among the local people. Local experience, the experience of the people, was the mirror of the worldwide programme – here we found a new methodology.

The *Sokoni* was different because it did not try to bring local experience to the level of concept in order to relate it to other realities, in order to *de-contextualise* it. Rather, the findings of case studies in other parts of the world were *re-contextualised*. Nobody tried to interpret the findings of some other context – experience could stand in its own right. The local context in Kenya became the framework for reflecting concept. The differences became a medium to see one's reality in a new way.

The Decade worked the same way. The local experience did not have to be lifted up to some reflective level – it was valid as it stood. Bringing it in relation with other local contexts did not diminish its validity but showed significant similarities as well as differences. Women could reflect on their own reality in listening to the other. *Local, regional and global reality* can be integrated – that is one of the exciting findings of the two processes before us!

In order to do that, there is one elementary presupposition: we have to learn how to listen. Learning how to listen includes creating a safe, protected space for others to talk. Be it that a woman has to feel protected in order to be encouraged to speak, be it that a man needs the role-play in order to express his thoughts. What is different can stay different. We do not have to force it into our own paradigm in order to give validity. This includes the courage to dare to encounter. Do not underestimate that. Diversity in itself is not the goal. Nobody leaves the encounter of the other unchanged.

We have realised that we have to link methodology and themes

The mid-Decade visits were not just methodology. Teams of women and men going; the churches hosting – that was already concept, thematic input. Actually I believe that is a very feminist approach. If there is a problem – talk about it. Go to the others' kitchen and start to talk. There is nothing so divisive that we cannot talk about it in this community we call the church – what a vision in contrast to the reality of our times! People talk everywhere in talk shows about the most intimate issues – but they do not talk *with* one another. Sending *Living Letters* was a most fascinating exercise. Though there have been the most devastating facts to face, though there has been the subtle veto-power that stifles any movement forward – people would not be silenced. There was trust in the encounter of the teams with the churches to talk about the issues at stake.

Sokoni as well has offered the ecumenical movement a working style that stimulates renewed vision, deeper analysis, and more creative cooperative methods, all pursued in ecumenical networks. Inclusiveness is prized, multiple entry points for analysis and advocacy are used, the kind of participation that builds on the experiences and energies of everyday life, that draws from traditions and the crosses boundaries and barriers, is facilitated. This leads to richer reflection by way of multiple perspectives freely exchanged. The further exploration of using that link is already taking place, for example in the Programme to Overcome Violence.

The link of methodology and themes is deeply rooted in the spirituality that carries the process, a spirituality growing from the life of people coming to full blossom in worship life.

We caught a glimpse of what the church might be: a community of lovers of life!

Ecclesiologically the *Sokoni* has been a powerful symbol to me: a church where you cannot close the door. We were in a round house! The minister sitting next to the street child, the refugee woman from Africa next to the professor of theology from the USA. All sitting in a open circle, no hierarchy possible and

anybody can join. The circle has no limits and no possibility of exclusion. If it becomes too crowded for you, you can go in one of the smaller round huts for personal exchange or for silent reflection. The experience was so deep because people did not present papers but talked about their lives. It was a living theology, theology of life. I remember vividly the Sudanese women crying, the presentation of the case studies while women were sewing and washing, the youth with their energy and power, the poems and story-telling, the African spirit of life in the midst of injustice and despair.

I believe that this was a breakthrough in the process of the linking ecclesiology and ethics we started during recent years. The church as an open space, where life has space. The church as a safe space where women are encouraged to speak instead of being silenced. They speak with women and men about childbirth and menstruation, about the loss of a child and abortion, about the joy of breastfeeding and about rape – that is, about the facts of giving, nurturing and losing life. Life, God's greatest, most wonderful gift at the centre of the encounter of God's people.

In fact solidarity, community, is growing out of the threat to life that occurs in different forms all over the world. The Decade and the *Sokoni* have shown that the church can be the centre of this growing community. Even more, the church comes into being. There is an ecclesiogenesis when people talk about their pain, about poverty and violence, about denial of human rights, about war and destruction. There is the vision of the church being the place for their stories, their experience and in sharing, new energy for life would grow. In telling and re-telling the stories of the God of Life ; of Jesus giving his own life so that all may live – the biblical message as the foundation of that church.

I am very grateful that the TOL and the Decade have given us this vision. It is a direct challenge to the churches themselves. Their community, their being the body of Christ, their essence is threatened if they are not a true community of women and men;
if the poor are not at its centre;
if we cannot speak about those essentials of life;
if children and youth are silenced;
if violence occurs even within churches and Christian communities.

So it seems that inclusiveness, participation, truth as a precondition for reconciliation, a look at history that includes the marginalised and mutual accountability are at the centre of an ecclesiological approach like that. In the Study of Transnational Corporations of the 70s, the WCC once claimed to challenge the transnationality of companies with the transnationality of the ecumenical movement. Today I think we should challenge the globalisation of economy and politics with the solidarity of Christians around the world, of people of faith around the world. The church of Christ overcomes all boundaries of class, gender, nation, ethnic group. It is a true community valuing life.

Doing theology means linking God's story and life

What is theology? *Theos*, *logos*, talking about God, words about faith. How far away from the people theology often exists! Theology of Life is counting on experience. It includes the realms of feeling and emotion resisting the common division between intellect and emotion, usually devaluing the latter in favour of the former. Theology of Life will entrust itself to the language of life. This language and this theology cannot have its origin in a marble tower (as M.M. Thomas argued with the German theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg in Utrecht in 1972). Professorial desks, meetings in conference centres and books cannot be the starting point. It rather is Life. For Unit III it has not been easy to dare to leave the "paper-approach". How do you ensure the process? What do you bring back, if there is no reporting. But we learned: Theology of Life will not allow to distinguish between theology and life, the reality of people and the teaching of the church, ecclesiology and ethics. The criterion is life as God wanted it, created it, life in fullness, respect.

Where people try to share in the midst of poverty; where solidarity is practised in the midst of oppression; wherever life is created, we are co-creators of the God of Life. Theology of Life is a theology linked to experience, it emerges from community and aims at deeper community. Therefore theology does not belong to the experts anymore. The people of God become the point of reference. Ethical questions, spirituality and theology are closely linked.

Theology has to be contextual in order to be relevant – what a challenge! In fact I believe that theology has always been contextual – but most of my German theological teachers would not agree... We learned in the process that theology is not far away

anymore; there is a theology deeply rooted in the experience of the people of God on their journey with their God. We go on telling these stories and become part of the story from Adam and Eve having to leave Eden; Abraham and Sarah leaving their home; Moses and Miriam taking their people out of Egypt; the people of God on their way.

This way we learn the language of life as well. The language of stories, of song and most of all poetic language. A poem can say much more than a long statement, we all know that. Maybe we have to regain our trust in the poetic language as well as our respect for emotion and feelings. By the way, the Bible is full of poetry and full of human feelings...

Let us dare to give shape to the vision of an ecumenical earth

The two projects have given shape to a vision of an ecumenical Earth. The concept of the ecumenical Earth is, so to say, the legacy of Unit III's work since Canberra that we offer to the wider ecumenical movement. It follows the footsteps of the Programme on a Just, Sustainable and Participatory society as well as the Programme on Justice, Peace and Creation. I see three key elements of that vision that will have to be explored further in the years to come:

- Life is the key element of that vision. The Vancouver Assembly still has lessons to tell in this respect. Life in all its fullness is probably the deepest longing of human beings. Life is bread and shelter, education and health. And it is more than bread alone, it means respect and dignity, justice and peace, love and truth. Life in fullness means inclusion, participation, belonging. And Life is a much wider concept than the human community alone.

- Secondly, I guess that the theological exploration of "oikos" might lead us further along the way and help us to deepen our understanding of the first findings. Oikos is a key element of talking about local reality as well as about Earth community as an all-inclusive life form.

- Thirdly, the exploration of the meaning of household will also be a key element. The global does not substitute for the local – they live in each other. This vision is a vital contribution to life on this planet. It is a challenge to a globalisation that simply pushes aside the local reality of people. So the debate will have to be linked to the challenge of globalisation we have already started to talk about.

In his report to the Central Committee, the general secretary spoke about the challenge to shape a new culture of life and hope. I believe the Decade itself and the Theology of Life are steps towards this culture. Two programmes have come to an end but they leave us with encouragement, signposts, challenge and vision for the future.

Dr Margot Kässmann is general secretary of the Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag, Germany, and member of the WCC Central Committee as well as of the Unit III Commission.

"So these are the five lessons I see:

- A new approach to the relation of local and global
- We have to link methodology and themes
- We have caught a glimpse of what the church might be: a community of lovers of life
- Doing theology means connecting God and life
- Let us dare to give shape to the vision of an ecumenical earth"

ESSAY COMPETITION

WCC Publications, the publisher for the World Council of Churches, announces an essay competition for young people on the topic

Jubilee: the ecumenical relevance of a biblical theme for the church today

in connection with the Eighth Assembly of the WCC, to be held in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998.

The Eighth Assembly will mark the 50th anniversary of the founding of the World Council of Churches. While "jubilee" is now often used to describe any 50th anniversary, the origins of the term are in the provisions in Leviticus 25 for a "jubilee" every 50 years, in which land was restored to its original owners and slaves were set free. In the prophetic literature of Israel, these elements of liberation were taken up in the announcement of the "year of the Lord's favour" (Isaiah 61:2, a passage later cited by Jesus in his sermon in Nazareth as recorded in Luke 4:18.19).

Eligibility

The contest is open to women and men born on or after 1 January 1964 and who are not members of the staff, Central Committee or programme unit commissions of the World Council of Churches.

General specifications

1. Essays must be between 3000 and 5000 words, and may be submitted in English, French, German or Spanish, in double-spaced typewritten form on one side of standard typing paper, with top and bottom, left and right margin of 2.5 cm (1 inch).

2. Essays must be original, not previously published work of the author (brief quotations from earlier works may be included with a clear indication of the source). Entrants whose first language is not one of those listed may use the services of a translator, whose name must be included with the essay.

3. The name of the writer, address, telephone number and telefax and e-mail numbers (if available), as well as a brief biographical note (*including age and first language*) should be included with the entry on a separate sheet. The name of the writer should not be included on the essay itself. Entrants should also include an address where they may be reached after 1 July 1998, if different from the current one.

4. Entries may be sent by mail or by telefax to the address below, but should arrive not later than 1 May 1998.

Judging

1. Essays will be evaluated on the basis of clarity, originality and ecumenical vision as assessed by a panel of judges.

2. The judges will select a prize-winning essay and up to ten other awards. These entries will be published either in an issue of *Ecumenical Review* or in a book by WCC Publications.

3. All entries will become the property of WCC Publications and will not be returned to the authors. Please keep a copy of your work.

4. We regret that it is not possible to correspond with entrants regarding the decisions of the judges.

Prizes

The winning essayist will receive an invitation to participate in the accredited visitors' programme of the WCC's Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December 1998, with all expenses paid for travel to Harare and board and lodging during the Assembly. Other prizes will be in form of certificates for the purchase of theological books.

Mailing address

WCC Publications
Assembly Essay Competition
Post Office Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland
Telefax: +41 (22) 798 13 46

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

MORUROA AND US:
POLYNESIANS' EXPERIENCES DURING THIRTY YEARS OF NUCLEAR TESTING IN THE FRENCH PACIFIC.

A team of the Polynesian NGO Hiti Tau, the Eglise Evangélique de Polynésie Française (EEPF) and two Dutch sociologists from the Wageningen Agricultural University (Pieter de Vries and Han Seur), conducted in 1996 a research on the effects of the French nuclear tests on the health and well-being of former test site workers and islanders living in the vicinity of Moruroa and Fangataufa (the sites where the tests were carried out).

It is the first time since the beginning of the nuclear tests in 1966 that the Polynesian former test workers have been the subject of an independent inquiry. ... The purpose of this research was to document and quantify the anxieties and uncertainties of Polynesians concerning nuclear testing, giving special emphasis to their health situation. ... One of the main anxieties of the former test site workers concerns their health and the health of their off-spring. Although the French authorities have always presented the test sites as a scientific laboratory, research on the long term effects of the nuclear testing programme on the health of the test site workers was not contemplated. From the answers given by the former test site workers it can be concluded that the French authorities did not even bother to collect relevant data on this subject. ... The fears and anxieties of the former test site workers run parallel with feelings of guilt about the fact of having actively participated, having been accomplices, in the nuclear testing programme. Many workers feel that they are to some extent responsible for the possible negative health and ecological consequences of the CEP. It can be said that at present among many former test site workers the feeling prevails that in return for money they have put their own lives and the society at risk, leading to widespread feelings of alienation.

A first step to overcome the existing distrust is that France should face up to its responsibilities and respond to the legitimate queries of Polynesians. A second step in order to heal the wounds left by the nuclear tests would be the setting up of an organisation that could fulfil an intermediate function between Polynesians and their authorities.

Extracts of a summary issued jointly by Hiti Tau, French Polynesia; Eglise Evangélique de Polynésie française (Evangelical Church of French Polynesia); World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland; Centre de Documentation et de Recherche sur la Paix et les Conflits (Documentation and Research Centre on Peace and Conflict), Lyon, France; Wageningen Agricultural University; and the European Centre for Studies, Information and Education on Pacific Issues, Zeist, The Netherlands.

This book is published by the Documentation and Research Centre on Peace and Conflict, PO Box 1027, 69201 Lyon Cédex 01, France (Tel: +33-478-369303, Fax: +33-478 363603). French versions can be ordered from them for for FF 95.-. Copies in English can be ordered from the WCC Publications Bookshop for Sfr. 25.-.

BRIDGES IN SPIRITUALITY: ABORIGINAL CHRISTIAN WOMEN TELL THEIR STORIES
Edited by Joyce Carlson and Alf Dumont

The stories of five women Elders from all across Canada and from both Anglican and United churches share their life stories and wisdom. How can Native spirituality and Christianity meet and strengthen each other? How can the mainstream church open itself to the teachings of a people it once thought it had nothing to learn from? How can Aboriginal Christians help heal a damaged culture? The stories told by Sarah Simon, Dr Jessie Salteaux, Gladys McCue Taylor, Gladys Taylor Cook, and Vi Smith touch on these and other modern issues.
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THE EARTH UNDER CARE:
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L'USUFRUIT DE LA TERRE:
COURANTS SPIRITUELS ET CULTURELS FACE AUX DÉFIS DE LA SAUVEGARDE DE LA PLANÈTE
Edited by Jean-Pierre Ribaut and Marie-José del Rey, Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer

In October 1995, a group of persons representing a large number of different spiritual communities and philosophies from the five continents of the world gathered in Klingenthal, Alsace (France) on an initiative by Pax Christi, the Johann Wolfgang von Gœthe Foundation and the Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation, to consider ways to join forces for a better management of the planet in the coming century. Buddhists, Christians, Baha'is, Hindus, Jews, Muslims, Australian Aborigines, African Animists, Incas, Native Americans from Canada and Brazil, Materialists, Universalists, and Freemasons: their convictions and feelings are often very different, but this document clearly shows their common concern for conserving the Earth for future generations. This undertaking of theirs constitutes an essential contribution to the building of an Alliance for a Responsible and United World.
ISSN 1254-9800

French or English versions of this publication can be obtained from: La Librairie FPH, 38 rue Saint-Sabin, 75011 Paris, France. Phone/Fax: +33-1-48-06 48 86.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

VOICES OF VOICELESS: WOMEN, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN GUATEMALA

Michelle Tooley

This book tells the stories of such women as Myrna Mack Chang, murdered by Guatemalan security forces, and Rigoberta Menchú, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Tooley interprets this agony and drama through theological reflection and perspectives on the political history of Guatemala. She invites North American Christians to confront ways individualism obstructs their compassionate responses to injustice in their own settings and abroad.

ISBN 0-8361-9057-2, US$, 14.99, paperback.
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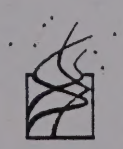

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